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Robert 1871
with E. L. on 1st
day of September

Thomas F. Toward

SCS#1096

A
DEFENCE
OF THE
REFORMATION-PRINCIPLES
OF THE
Church of Scotland.

WHEREIN

The EXCEPTIONS that are laid against the Conduct of the ASSOCIATE PRESBYTERY, as also against their judicial *Act* and *Testimony*, by the Reverend Mr. Currie in his *Essay on Separation*, are examined; and the injurious Reflections cast upon our Re-forming Period from 1638 to 1650, in the foresaid *Essay*, are discovered.

By WILLIAM WILSON A. M. Minister of the Gospel
at PERTH.

Rev. ii. 25. *But that which ye have already, hold fast till I come.*
Jude, Ver. 3.----*Earnestly contend for the Faith which was once delivered unto the Saints.*

" When the greatest Part of a Church maketh Defection from
" the Truth, the lesser Part remaining sound, the greatest
" Part is the Church of Separatists: Tho' the manifest and
" greatest Part in the actual Exercise of Discipline be the
" Church; yet, in the Case of right Discipline, the best, tho'
" fewest, is the Church, &c." *Rutherford's Due Right*, &c.
p. 255.

Plausibile quidem est nomen Pacis: sed maledicta est Pax quæ tanta jactura redimitur, ut nobis pereat Christi Doctrina: quæ sola, in piam & sanctam Unitatem coalescimus. Calvin, in Acta Apost. p. 200.

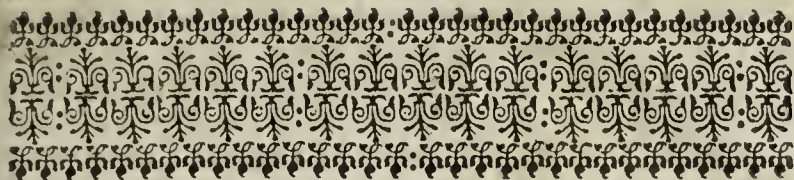
EDINBURGH,

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Advertisement.

THE Quotations from the judicial *Act* and *Testimony* of the *Associate Presbytery* are insert according to the last Edition printed on fine Paper, by *Thomas Lumisden* and *John Robertson*; and these that are quoted in the *Essay*, are mentioned according to the Pages of the said Edition: And such as want it, may be furnished with it at the Printing-house of the said Persons; as also, with any of the other Papers published by the Seceding Ministers.

The Author expects that no Person will presume to reprint this *Defence* without special Licence from himself.



PREFACE.

THE *Testimony* of the Church of *Scotland*, since her Reformation from Popery, has been stated and prosecuted for the Rights and Prerogatives of the Kingly Office of the Lord Jesus, for his sole Headship and Royal Supremacy over the *Church* his spiritual Kingdom. And as the Headship of Christ over his Kingdom has been often encroached upon by the Powers of this Earth, so it has been expressly witnessed and wrestled for by the Followers of the Lamb in this Land, unto the Spoiling of their Goods, unto Imprisonments and Banishments, yea, even unto cruel Tortures and Resisting unto Blood. In like Manner, the Judicatories of the Kirk of *Scotland*, in all their several Contendings in her reforming Periods, have expressly witnessed for the Order, Government and Discipline of the House of God, agreeable to the *Pattern shown in the Mount* of Scripture-revelation, against Prelatic Tyranny, Sectarian Disorder and Confusion, and Erastian Usurpations upon the Prerogatives of Him who is, by his Father's Designation and Appointment, *King over Zion the Hill of his Holiness*.

If we shall seriously consider the State of Matters in the Church of *Scotland* at present, we shall find, that, since the mild Treatment which was given to a Scheme of dangerous and pernicious Principles, by the General Assembly that met *Anno 1717*, when Mr. *Simson* was dismissed from the Bar of that Assembly, with a general Admonition, without any particular express Testimony against his several pernicious Principles, Laxness both in Principle and Practice has prevailed from Time to Time, Error has taken deep Root, it has been on the growing Hand, and Errors still more gross and more dangerous have been disseminate amongst us; the true Deity of the great God our Redeemer, and of the Holy Ghost our

Sanctifier and Comforter, has been impugned and denied; the Idol of *Self* has been exalted and set up in the Temple of God: And what lamentable Instances have we of late of horrid Blasphemies by some anonymous Writers, from the Press, in their profane Ridicule of the several peculiar and special Doctrines of revealed Religion? I know not if we can find a Parallel unto them in any Age since the first spreading of Christianity amongst the Nations.

Tho' the Kingly Office of the Lord Jesus our exalted Redeemer, *on whose Head are many Crowns*, has been in a special Manner in former Times; and may even in our Day be, reckoned the *Word of Christ's Patience* given unto the Church of Scotland, and for which she is called faithfully to contend; yet in these perillous Times in which our Lot is cast, wherein many gross and dangerous Errors abound, whereby the Foundations of our Christian Faith are subverted, she is loudly called to *enlarge* her Testimony, and to bear more express Witness unto the true Deity of the Person of Christ, and to his Prophetick and Priestly Offices, against a Generation of Men, who endeavour to rob the Redeemer of his essential Glory, and who profanely trample upon many important Truths of Revealed Religion, held forth from the Word of God, in our excellent *Confession of Faith*.

In the Year 1733, the Judicatories of this National Church thrust out *Four* Ministers from Ministerial Communion with them, for no other Reason but because they *protested*, for their own Exoneration, against an Act and Sentence, restraining that Freedom and Liberty of testifying *doctrinally* against publick Sins and Defections, which belongs to their Office as Ministers, both by the Word of God, and by the Acts and Constitutions of this National Church; whereupon the said Ministers judged it their Duty to *associate* together in a Presbyterial Capacity, being perswaded from the Word of God, that the *Keys of Government* and *Discipline* are given to Ministers of the Gospel, as well as the *Key of Doctrine*, and that the former may and ought to be exercised by Ministers Two or Three *in collegio*, and that it is not *Numbers*, but the *Truth* on their Side, that gives Authority and Weight to the Acts and Decisions of any Church-judicatory, *Matth. xvi. 19. and xviii. 18, 19, 20.* And, having constitute themselves into a Presbytery, they waited three Years, to see if the present Judicatories would discharge the Duties incumbent upon them: But finding, that instead of returning
unto

The PREFACE.

v

unto the Lord, and lifting up any faithful Testimony for wounded and injured Truth, the Course of Defection and Backsliding was carried on, and particularly, that in the Year 1736 Error was justified at the Bar of the Assembly that met the said Year, and dismissed without any Censure at all; therefore they did emit a *Judicial Act and Testimony*, condemning several Steps of Defection, both in present and former Times, from that Reformation-purity once attained unto in this National Church, as also asserting the Truth in Opposition to several gross and dangerous Errors that had been brought unto the Bar of the Judicatories, and which they dismissed without any due or suitable Testimony against them: And *Four* other Ministers found it their Duty to declare their Conjunction with the foresaid Ministers, after they had waited for some Time in the Judicatories, till they could see no probable Ground to hope or expect that they would set about the Reformation of Corruptions, and the Purging of the House of God of these Scandals that had been frequently complained of, and often remonstrate against.

The Reverend Mr. *Currie* Minister at *Kinglassie* has thought fit to take the Field against the *Associate Presbytery*, and to condemn them, and their judicial *Act and Testimony*, in a Book which he intitles, *An Essay on Separation, OR, A Vindication of the Church of Scotland*. How an *Essay on Separation*, and a *Vindication of the Church of Scotland*, are *equivalent Terms*, as the *Title* imports, I leave it to himself, or the Recommenders of his Book to explain. That which I here notice is, that, through the Whole of his Book, he ranks the Associate Ministers amongst the most rigid *Separatists*; he joins them with the grossest Sectarians, and lays the Charge of Schism against them. In his Preface, p. 11. he tells his Reader, That these Brethren "are doing what they can, to rent, ruine, "and occasion Separation from the Church of Scotland." This is a very grievous Charge indeed: But, does not our Author make some Acknowledgment (*Essay*, p. 59.) that the Church of *Scotland* may be worse at this Day than sometimes formerly? Does he not profess to regret the late Omissions, with respect to a judicial Testimony for Truth, that have been justly complained of? Does he not own that there are many Things both amongst Ministers and People that call for bitter Mourning and Lamentation? p. 221. tho' he is very sparing in condescending upon Particulars. I have not observed that he undertakes

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to justify expressly any of the Steps of Defection, whether in former or present Times, that are condemned by the Presbytery in their judicial Act and Testimony; only, he alleges as to some few of them, that they are controverted Points, and therefore, according to him, not fit Matter for a Testimony. What now have the Associate Presbytery done, for which the Charge of Renting and Ruining the Church is brought against them? They have even done what our Author acknowledges the Judicatories of the Church should have done; they have judicially condemned some Steps of Defection, and asserted the Truths in Opposition unto many particular Errors of the present Times, which they have in like Manner particularly and expressly condemned: Are they therefore *Schismatics*, Renters and Ruiners of the Church? Yea, says our Author, they are, and that because they testify in a Way of *Secession*. But, can a judicial Testimony for Truth, and against a Course of Defection, be obtained in a Way of Conjunction with the present Judicatories? He cannot refuse that the Judicatories decline to discharge this Duty: Ought the Duty therefore to be neglected by the *few* who are grieved with their Management? Is it agreeable either to the Word of God, or sound Reason, to say, Because the *Majority* of an Ecclesiastick Body carry on a Course of Defection, and, instead of doing Justice to the Truths of God, do manifest Injury unto them, that therefore the *Minority*, who are grieved with their Proceedings, ought not judicially to witness against a Course of Defection, and in the same Manner vindicate and assert injured Truth? or, must they be reckoned *Schismatics* and Renters of the Church if they do so? The Unjustice of the Charge that is laid against the seceding Ministers, of *Ruining* and *Renting* the Church, will further appear, if we enquire into the *Reasons* why the present Judicatories refuse to condemn such Steps of Defection, or to purge out such Corruptions, whereby the whole Lump is in Danger to be leavened. Has not the Wisdom of the Son of God, the glorious Head of the Church, provided sufficient Remedies in the Church for all her internal Necessities? Is not the Discipline of Christ's Appointment a sufficient Mean for the Preservation and Reformation of his own House? And, have not the Courts of Christ Power and Authority from the Lord Jesus to exercise the Keys of Government and Discipline for the Edification of his Body, and the Advancement of his Honour

nour and Glory? What Reason then can be given, why the present Judicatories refuse to discharge their Duty in lifting up a judicial Testimony for Truth, or why they refuse to set about Reformation-work? There must be one of two, I cannot conceive a *Midst* betwixt them; either they *will not*, or they are *bindred* to discharge their Duty by some outward *Force* and Violence upon them. I hope the last cannot be alledged. This was indeed the Case of this Church betwixt 1600 and 1638. The Judicatories were born down by Force and Violence from the *Court*; King *James VI.* threatned and oppressed them; he confined, imprisoned, or banished many eminent Ministers, when they were contending and wrestling for the Rights and Liberties of the Kingdom of Christ: But it cannot be alledged, that any such Violence has been offered in the least to the present Judicatories, or any of their Members; therefore no other Reason can be given for the Conduct of the Judicatories, but that they are *obstinate* in their Course and Way, and will not reform. And I doubt not to assert, that, when the *Majority* of a particular visible Church do in their Ecclesiastical or Judicative Capacity go on in a Course of Defection from Reformation-purity once attained unto, and will not be reformed, after the ordinary Means have been used to reclaim them, that then, and in this Case, the *minor Part*, tho' but very few in Number, who desire to be found faithful unto the Lord, and to hold fast the Purity once attained unto, may, yea, ought to *depart* from Church-communion with the backsliding Part; and that such as are Office-bearers may warantably exercise the Keys of Government and Discipline, in a *distinct Capacity* from the *Majority* who are the *backsliding Part*, for these Ends and Purposes for which they are given unto the Church by her exalted and glorious Head. It is upon this Principle that my Reasonings for Secession from the present Judicatories are built; and I hope it will be found agreeable to the Word of God, and to the laudable Acts and Constitutions of this National Church; and I look upon it to be a Reformation-principle, or a Principle upon which the reformed Churches did at first set out, and carry on the Reformation-work. To the same Purpose a considerable Divine * expresses himself; "And when any Church is so inobservant of its own Decays, as to be negligent of Endeavours for a proportionable Reformation,

* Owen's *Humble Testimony*, Pref. p. 7.

“ mation, if after a while any will deliver their own
 “ Souls, it must be by a *Departure* from them that *hate to*
 “ *be reformed.*”

The *Author* of the *Essay* is very sparing in his *Scripture*-pleadings, a few Pages do the Business in his fifth Chapter; but he abounds in *human Authorities*, his Book is swelled with them, his Page is everywhere filled with *Quotations* from great Men, upon whom he bestows liberal Encomiums, such as these of *eminently holy, zealous, learned and judicious*, and sometimes all these with one Breath, when he would have “ such as have separated or are tempted to “ separate from this Church seriously to weigh their Sentiments;” as p. 51. I doubt not of our Author’s Regard to the worthy Men he mentions, and I make no Question but they deserved the Characters he gives them; yet I do not think I transgress the Bounds of Charity, when I alledge, that the above high Characters are given them, as much out of a sly Design to impress his simple and credulous Readers, as from a just and true Regard to these worthy Men themselves, as appears from his above Words.

The *Author* of the *Essay* lets the World know, that he has had a good Number of *Books* in his Hand; but I must beg Leave to observe, that the most Part of his *Quotations* are applied in a Manner contrary to the Intention and Design of the worthy Authors, if the Connexion of the Purposes which they treat, and out of which the Quotations are taken, is duly considered: And therefore I humbly judge I may justly apply to our Author some Words of Doctor *Owen* in his Defence of the Dissenters, against Doctor *Stillingsfleet*, who seems to have managed the Argument against the Dissenters after the same Manner; “ Neither, *says he*, to my Knowledge, did I ever “ read a Book wherein there was a greater Appearance of “ Diligence in the Collection of Things, Words, Sayings, Expressions, Discourses unto other Ends, which “ might only cast *Odium* on the Cause opposed, or give “ Advantage for Arguings unto a seeming Success, very “ little or noway belonging unto the Cause in Hand, “ than there is in this of our Reverend Author †.” I have given several particular Instances, which I hope will satisfy the Reader that the above Observation is just: I have not pursued every Quotation of our Author’s, otherwise I had drawn forth this Performance to a greater Length; and I fear I have Ground to make an Apology for

† *Eng. Pref. p. 43.*

for writing so much upon the Subject, it is very much contrary to my own Inclination; but the great Variety of Matter that the Essay has brought upon the Field, has obliged me unto it.

I must further observe, that tho' Quotations from great and learned Men may be of very considerable Use to illustrate and clear an Argument, yet if the Argument, especially when it is upon a religious Subject, leans only to the *Authority* of Men, the Simple and Credulous may be either amused or imposed upon; but it can never be convincing and satisfying to such as with Knowledge and Judgment search after the Truth. Besides, when, in a Dispute, the Authority of great and learned Men is thrown up, we are led to enquire into the Sense and Meaning of these great Writers; and it is often a fruitless spending of Time, to insist in Debates about the Sense and Meaning of the Words of great and learned Men. I would have willingly avoided any Thing of this Nature, but our Author has obliged me unto it, not only that I may do Justice unto the great Names whom I judge our Author has injured, but especially that I may do Justice to the *Cause* against which he has employed his Pen. I have frequently brought some of our Author's learned and great Men *against himself*, and made use of others for clearing and illustrating my Argument; but if any Principles and Conclusions that I have laid down are founded only on the Authority of Men, if they are not built upon the Divine Testimony, or if they are not supported by sound Reason, in an Agreeableness to the Word of God, and the Acts and Constitutions of this Church founded thereon, let them be rejected, and I shall reckon myself obliged to our Author or any other who shall discover them unto me.

With respect to our Author's Treatment of our *reforming Period*, he apprehends (*Pref.* p. 4.) "that it may be thought strange that he has given so many Instances of Faults, Failings, or bad Acts of our Assemblies from 1638 to 1649 *inclusive*, which, *says he*, have been reckoned by some the purest Times of Presbytery." It is very obvious, that our Author is none of these *Some*, who reckon these Times the purest Times of Presbytery; but however diminutively our Author may speak of them, yet the Bulk and Body of Presbyterians who have known these Times, or who are acquainted with the History of them, have always esteemed them as Times both of Divine

Power and great Purity in the Church of *Scotland*, excell-
 ling any After-period of this Church, in many Instances ;
 till now, that the *Author* of the Essay, a *professed Presby-*
terian, has discovered some Acts of Tyranny in the Admi-
 nistration of these Times, if not exceeding, yet equal at
 least to, any Thing that can be alledged from the Con-
 duct of the present Judicatories of this National Church.
 But he makes the following Apology for what he is ap-
 prehensive may be thought strange ; “ I own (*says he*) the
 “ Lord honoured his faithful Servants in that Period to
 “ do much for his Glory, for which I desire to give Praise ;
 “ and, my *Witness is in Heaven*, I have not mentioned any
 “ of these with a Desire or Design to blacken the Church
 “ of *Scotland*, or such worthy Ministers as lived in that
 “ Period, but for her Vindication at this Day, &c.”
 After such a solemn *Appeal* to Heaven, I shall judge cha-
 ritably of our Author’s Intentions and Designs ; He to
 whom the Appeal is made, can only penetrate into them :
 But then I must be allowed to say, That the Tendency
 and Design of what he writes upon this Head, is to wea-
 ken all the Arguments drawn from that Period for the
 Purity of our Reformation. He owns that the Lord ho-
 noured his faithful Servants, &c. but, does he ever men-
 tion any particular Step of Reformation attained unto, or
 maintained in the fore said Period ? We have a fair and
 smooth General, that his *faithful Servants did much for*
his Glory ; but, does he ever tell us any of these Things
 which they did for his Glory ? Nay, when he speaks of
 our reforming Period, he tells us, It was *reckoned by some*
the purest Times of Presbytery, and often mentions it un-
 der the Name of *that extolled Period* : And he gathers to-
 gether through his Book, any Thing that he can invent
 or alledge against it ; he throws up what he reckons their
 Faults, Failings, or bad Acts, without mentioning their
 faithful and zealous Proceedings in a Work of Reforma-
 tion : Let the unprejudiced World judge, if a Perfor-
 mance of this Kind has not a direct Tendency to *blacken*
 the above reforming Period. But, not to insist upon this,
 let us examine what our Author declares to be his own
 Intention and Design, in giving so many Instances of
 Faults, Failings, and bad Acts of former Assemblies ; It
 is, says he, “ for her Vindication (*viz.* of the Church
 “ of *Scotland*) at this Day, and to shew that tho’ the chief
 “ Ground urged by sundry for Separation in our Day,
 “ is our alledged dreadful, scandalous, unparalleled Apo-
 “ stasy

The PREFACE.

xi

“ stay from what the Church of *Scotland* was in that Period; yet the Practice of Judicatories then, is what can as little be justified in sundry Things, as the Practice of the Church of *Scotland* in our Times.” And in his short Vindication, p. 10. he tells us, that in the above-mentioned Instances he had “ nothing so much in View, as the Justification of the Church of *Scotland* at this Day, from the Charge of being such a scandalously apostate Church from what she was in that Period, that now no Communion is to be kept with her.” What is here advanced by our Author, is designed to relieve his Reader from the strange Thoughts he may entertain with respect to his own Conduct, in the Instances that he gives of the bad Acts of the former Period; but, how can any reasonable Man imagine, that giving Instances of the Faults, Failings, or bad Acts of a Church in one Period, can tend to the Vindication or Justification of the bad Acts of a Church in another Period? or, how they can tend to prove, that, notwithstanding of these bad Acts, Communion is still to be kept with her? But, if our Author only means a *comparative* Vindication and Justification of the Church of *Scotland* at this Day, I have examined the Charge he brings against the Period mentioned, and I hope I have discovered the Falshood of it in many particular Instances: But was it true, that the Proceedings of the Judicatories were then as bad as now, or that they were as tyrannical in the Administration in the former, as in the present Period; yet our Author’s Conclusion would never follow from his Premises, since he owns, *Pref.* p. 5. that “ her Conduct in that Period is not to be our Rule, but as it agrees with the Divine Testimony; and adds, Her Failings are not to be instanced as Precedents for Imitation, nor mentioned as the least Excuse for our Faults in later Times.” He might then have spared all his Pains, and not mentioned any of them for the Church’s *Vindication* at this Day, seeing they are so far from being a Vindication, that, according to his own Sentiments, they cannot be the *least Excuse* for our Faults in later Times.

I must further observe upon this Head, that as the Argument is laid by our Author, from the Instances of Failings and bad Acts of former Assemblies, in order to the Vindication and Justification of the Church of *Scotland* at this Day, he has indeed managed it with abundance of *Cunning*, but not with that *Candour* that becomes one of his

Profession and Character; in regard he only mentions alledged Failings and bad Acts of our reforming Period. If he had dealt honestly with the former and present Generations, he ought likewise to have *compared* the Proceedings of the Judicatories at this Day, with the faithful and zealous Contendings of the Church of Scotland for Reformation-work from the Year 1638 to 1649; and, if he had stated the Comparison justly upon this Head, his Reader might easily have seen, that the Charge of Defection from our Reformation-purity, that is laid against the present Judicatories, can very well be vindicated, notwithstanding of the Instances he alledges against the Assemblies during the foresaid Period: His Reader might likewise have seen the vast Difference that there is betwixt the *general* and *habitual* Course of the Proceedings of the Assemblies during our reforming Period, and the *Procedure* of Assemblies in the present Times of lamentable Degeneracy and Defection; namely, That the *former* were towards *Reformation*, and that the *latter* have a manifest Tendency towards *Deformation*; and consequently, that all our Author's alledged Instances of Faults, Failings, and bad Acts of Assemblies in the former Period of this Church, when duly examined, make nothing at all to his Purpose. Upon the Whole, notwithstanding of the above Apology the Author makes for himself, I cannot conceive that he has gained any Thing by the many Instances he alledges of bad Acts of former Assemblies wherewith he swells his Book, and which he repeats I know not how often, but the Hardning of the present Generation in their Iniquity, when it is represented unto them through the Whole of the *Essay*, that their Sins were equalled, if not exceeded, in a Period which has been reckoned the purest Times of this Church; as also the exposing of the Church of Scotland to the Ridicule of our common Adversaries, who have always stretched their wicked Inventions to defame our reforming Period, and who may now make their Boast of it, that a *professed Son* of the Church of Scotland does in several Instances *symbolize* with them in the Contempt they have poured upon the famous Assembly 1638, and other Assemblies of that Period.

Our Author, *Pref.* p. 11. makes another solemn Appeal in the following Terms; "Tho' here I can appeal to the
 " *Searcher of Hearts*, I have said nothing with a Design
 " to displease any, and said nothing but what I concei-
 " ved to be Truth and Matter of Fact; yet, as I have
 " not

“ not written with a Design to please any Party, so I lay
 “ my Account with Censure from Persons of very diffe-
 “ rent Sentiments, &c.” Tho’ I have given several parti-
 cular Instances of Things advanced by our Author, that
 are neither *Truth* nor *Matter of Fact*; yet I shall charitably
 judge, that he conceives what he has writ to be *Truth*
 and *Matter of Fact*: Only, I wish he had been more
 tender in making such solemn Appeals and Attestations,
 which appear to me to be equivalent to a solemn *Oath*;
 or I wish that at least he had better advised what he has
 written, before he had ushered in his Essay to the World
 with such weighty and awful Attestations. He insinuates
 in his *Preface*, that it had been *two Years* at least upon
 his Hands; and I conceive the Church of *Scotland* would
 have been at no Loss, neither would *Truth* have sustained
 any Prejudice, tho’ it had lien till *this Day* in his Closet,
 amongst his other Papers, which according to his *Adver-*
tisement he was once resolved to publish. But, whatever
 his or my Conceptions may be, I doubt if he will per-
 swade every one who reads his Essay, and who knows the
 History of this Church, to believe that *he himself* is well
 assured that *every Thing* is *Truth* and *Matter of Fact*
 which he reports in his Essay. It is a considerable Loss
 unto this Church, that we want a full and just History
 of the above-mentioned Period; we have nothing but
 some scattered Shreds and Fragments of the History of
 these Times: However, I have endeavoured, from the
 best historical Vouchers that I could find, to give some
 short Account of the Rise and Progress of Reformation-
 work in the Year 1638; this, with the other historical
 Accounts that I have given, for vindicating that despised
 Period from the Contempt that many cast upon it, and
 for discovering the Falshood of several Matters of Fact
 alledged in the Essay, has very much swelled this Book:
 Yet I hope it will not be disagreeable to the Lovers of
Scotland’s Covenanted Reformation, and may be useful
 for the Information of such as are willing to receive it;
 the most Part of the present Generation being very much
 unacquainted with the remarkable Appearances of the
 Lord for this Church in former Times, and with the faith-
 ful Proceedings and Contendings of our reforming Fathers,
 for maintaining and carrying on a Work of Reformation
 in this Land.

As I have no Pleasure in controversial Writings, so I
 had no Inclination to attempt an Examination of the Re-
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verend Mr. C---e's Essay on Separation, considering the Difficulties that attend an Undertaking of this Kind, especially at this Juncture, not only from the critical Humour of the Age, but also from the different Views, and divided Sentiments, that are to be found even among such who fear the Lord, in this Day of Perplexity in our Valley of Vision; being also conscious to myself of my own Insufficiency for managing a Work of this Nature; yet I was led by the Hand of Providence to it in the following Manner. Upon the first reading of the Reverend Mr. C---e's Essay, published a little before the down-sitting of the last Assembly *Anno* 1738, it appeared plain to me, that as he had *mistaken* the *State* of the *Question* betwixt the seceding Ministers and the present Judicatories, so he had set their whole Case in a very *odious Light*, both to the Prejudice of Truth, and of that Cause which the seceding Ministers espouse, and which I hope and am persuaded is no other but what is espoused by the Church of Scotland in her laudable Acts and Constitutions, agreeable to the Word of God, our *Confession of Faith*, *Form of Church-government*, *Books of Discipline*, and *Directory for Worship*, and which we are bound and obliged to espouse and cleave unto, by the National Covenant of Scotland, and the Solemn League and Covenant of the three Nations. This engaged me to publish a *Letter* I had writ a Reverend *Brother* on the Subject of Secession from the present Judicatories, to which I subjoined a *Postscript*, containing some *Remarks* upon the *Essay* on Separation; this I did with a Design to clear the true State of the present Question, and to prevent the Impressions that might be made, to the Prejudice of Truth, upon the Minds of inadvertent Readers, by a *Book* filled with the *Names* of great Men, and at the same Time highly applauded, and strongly recommended by Men of different Principles, and, I doubt not to say, from different Motives and Ends. Whether the Essay was recommended so warmly by some considerable Men, both Ministers and others, from any Conviction they had of the Justness and Strength of the Author's Reasonings; or rather, if they did not recommend it, because they judged it a Book calculate to make some *Impression* upon the Minds of People, from the Author's fair and smooth Language, and the *large Profession* he has made of *Zeal* for the *Rights* of the *Christian People*, and his numerous *Quotations* from *Divines* which are justly esteemed; whether I say, their

Recommendations did chiefly proceed from one or other of these Springs, is a Question I leave with themselves, and shall not determine: Only I must own, that, if this Essay had not been so much applauded and recommended, I should never have judged it worth my while to have enquired further unto it. And, when I came to read it over again with some more close Attention, I soon perceived that the few Remarks I had made in the above *Postscript*, tho' I judged them just, yet were very defective; and therefore I digested my further Thoughts upon it, into the Order and Method in which they are now published. And as I judged the Publishing of them was a Debt that I owed to the Truth, so I thought it likewise my Duty to give a Reason of the Hope that is in me, upon such a publick and confident Challenge as the Author of the Essay has given: As also, I judged it incumbent upon me, to contribute my Endeavours to remove the Mistakes that many are under, and the Prejudices that others are filled with, against a Cause that is industriously misrepresented by some, and out of mere Ignorance spoke against by others. If the Author of the Essay thinks fit to enter into the Question and Argument as I have endeavoured to clear and state them, I shall, if the Lord give Time and Health, attend him; but if he diverts from the true State of the Question, amusing the Simple with misapplied Quotations from eminent and learned Divines, or with reporting private Stories and Hearsays, I reckon I have more important Work on my Hands than to take any Manner of Notice of him.

The Author of the Essay, in his *Title-page*, mentions only the *seceding Brethren* as his Parties; and in his *Preface*, p. 10. he tells us, That, "when he entred upon the Subject of Separation, he had not a Thought of mentioning the said Brethren as writing against their Conduct, but that upon second Thoughts he judged it needful to consider their Testimony, &c." Accordingly, a great Part of his Essay is laid against a Book called *Plain Reasons, &c.* a Book in which the *seceding Brethren* have no Manner of Concern. As I have not read it for several Years bypast, so I am not to take any Manner of Notice of what our Author advances about it; whether or not he has done Justice to the Author or Authors of the said Book, I leave it to themselves to enquire into: In the mean Time, since it is only upon *second Thoughts* (as he tells us) that he brought in his *seceding Brethren*,
and

and since the *Plain Reasons* have so much Room in his Essay, he might have given that Book a Place likewise in his Title-page; but he has thought fit to do otherwise, for Reasons best known to himself, leaving it to the World to make what Conjectures they please.

When I have considered the lax Principles concerning Church-communion that run through the *Essay on Separation*, and that the evident Tendency of that whole Performance is not only to defame a reforming Period of this Church, but also to cast loose our Reformation-principles; I have ventured to send this Book abroad, under the Title of, *A Defence of the Reformation-principles of the Church of Scotland*; being likewise perswaded that there is nothing maintained or asserted in the *Judicial Act and Testimony* of the Associate Presbytery, but the very same Principles: But, if any shall take Exception at the Title, I wish that, before they censure and condemn it, they would give themselves the Trouble to read over the Book; and if any other but our Reformation-principles agreeable to the Word of God are asserted, I shall (as I have said) reckon myself obliged unto them who point them out unto me: And, if any alledge that I have failed in the Defence of the said Principles, I readily acknowledge I have failed very much this Way, but I have endeavoured to do what I could; and it is with some Difficulty that I have got some few Hours spared now and then, for a Work of this Kind, from the other necessary Duties of my Ministerial Office and Calling.

I conclude this Preface with transcribing a few Words which, Mr. Knox in his History reports, were uttered by Mr. *Wisbart*, who was an eminent Instrument in the Hand of the Lord in bringing the Church of *Scotland* out of *Rome Antichristian*, and who sealed the Testimony of Jesus with his Blood, against the Abominations of *Rome*. A little before his violent Death, he expressed himself in the following Manner; “ This Realm shall be illuminated
 “ with the Light of Christ’s Gospel, as clearly as ever
 “ any Realm since the Days of the Apostles; the House
 “ of God shall be builded in it; yea, it shall not lack
 “ (whatsoever the Enemy imagine in the contrary) the
 “ very Cope-stone: Neither (said he) shall this be long
 “ to; there shall not many suffer after me, till that the
 “ Glory of the Lord shall evidently appear, and shall once
 “ triumph in Despite of *Satan*: But, alas, if the People
 “ shall be after unthankful, then fearful and terrible
 “ shall

“ shall the Plagues be that shall follow.” The above Words of one who had a more than ordinary Measure of the Spirit of God, and who was a Seer in his Day, deserve to be noticed; especially because they are agreeable unto the Testimony of God in the Holy Scriptures, and also because they may give us some View of the State of the Church of *Scotland*, both in her reforming and declining Periods. When I consider the Words of the Spirit of God by the Prophet, *Isa. lv. 5. Behold, thou shalt call a Nation that thou knowest not, and Nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee, &c. Isa. xlii. 4. And the Isles shall wait for his Law; and Psalm ii. 8. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the Heathen for thine Inheritance, and the uttermost Parts of the Earth for thy Possession*; I doubt not to say, that in *Scotland*, in reforming and covenanting *Scotland*, the above and the like Prophecies had in Part a signal & glorious Accomplishment, and that the Event answered what the above eminent Instrument in our Reformation had foreseen and expressed: And if we consider our *Unthankfulness* unto God for his signal Appearances for us, manifested in the Degeneracy of all Ranks of Persons in *Scotland* from the Lord, the whole Word of God gives us Ground to apprehend fearful and terrible Judgments upon us. Yea, what fearful Judgments are we under at present? A perverse Spirit is at this Day mingled amongst us, a Spirit of Error and Delusion prevails, the Anger of the Lord has divided us, and the good Spirit of God is very much departed from our Assemblies for Worship and Discipline, and the Spirit of deep Sleep and Slumber is poured out upon us; these and the like spiritual Strokes may be the Forerunners of some terrible Appearance of God in a Way of righteous and holy Judgment against us.

When I have mentioned the evident *Restraint* of the Spirit, I cannot but take Notice of a Reflection made by the Author of the Essay, p. 25. where, after some Words transcribed from a Print called *A Seasonable Testimony*, our Author, as appears to me, with a Sneer at the Seceding Brethren, subjoins, “ Nor (*says he*) have we heard of any extraordinary Pouring out of the Spirit attending the Ministry of our Brethren more than others; few pricked at the Heart, crying out, *Men and Brethren, what shall we do to be saved?*” The above Reflection is very indecent in one of our Author’s Character and Profession: But I shall only observe upon it, that I hope every one of the *seceding* Brethren will readily acknowledge that they

are not free of the Guilt and Sin of our Day, whereby the Spirit of the Lord is grieved and provoked to depart; and that therefore they ought to be humbled before the Lord as much as others. And tho' they do not alledge that there is any extraordinary Pouring out of the Spirit attending their Ministry *more than others*, yet if the Lord is pleased at any Time to countenance his Work amongst their Hands, either in the Conviction or Edification of any, whether upon the Days of solemn Humiliation that they observe through the Land, or upon other Occasions, the least Measure, I say, of such Countenance from the Lord, ought to be humbly acknowledged, especially in a Day of great Provocation; and there should be a Waiting *upon the Lord, who hideth his Face from the House of Jacob*. And tho' the seceding Brethren may be upbraided with the above insulting Reflections, yet as the Communications of the Holy Spirit are not the Rule of our Duty, but the *Law* and the *Testimony*; so it may be alleviating unto them, that the Case is not altogether singular, I mean with respect to the above *Reflection*. An eminent *Witness* in his Day cries out, *Psal. xlii. 10. As with a Sword in my Bones, mine Enemies reproach me: While they say daily unto me, Where is thy God?* And the Church in like Manner, *Psal. cxv. 2.* But as every one of us have a deep Hand in the Provocation, and as the Lord is holy and righteous in pleading his Controversy with us; May that blessed Time come, when the Lord's professing People in *Scotland* shall thro' the Influence of his Spirit and Grace, by the Means of his Word, be made to say, *Come and let us return unto the Lord: For he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up*, *Hof. vi. 1.* May the Lord hasten it.

WILLIAM WILSON.



A
DEFENCE
 OF THE
REFORMATION-PRINCIPLES
 . OF THE
Church of Scotland, &c.

INTRODUCTION.

Containing a short Narrative of some Contendings in a way of Church-communion, for some Years immediately before the Secession from the present Judicatories was stated.



THAT it is Duty to *testify* against the Defections and Backslidings of a particular visible Church from that Reformation-purity she has once attained unto, is what cannot well be refused; but, with respect to the *Manner* of testifying against such Defections and Backslidings, this is so much disputed, under so many specious Pretexts, and from such different Principles and Motives, that, in effect, any kind of publick Testimony against the Corruptions of a backsliding Church is condemned, as having a Tendency towards Division, Schism and unwarrantable Separation. There

are only two Ways alledged whereby a Testimony can be maintained against such Corruptions as may prevail in a Church; the one is, by *Secession* from that Part of the Ecclesiastick Body who are carrying on a Course of Defection, and who obstinately continue in the same, refusing to be reclaimed; the other is, by continuing in Communion and Conjunction with them, and at the same Time testifying against their Corruptions and Defections. With respect to the *first* of these, when a *Testimony is maintained in a way of Secession*, these from whom the Secession is made, having Numbers for ordinary on their Side, exclaim against such as withdraw from Communion with them, as dangerous *Schismatics*: Thus the Church of *Rome* accuse all the Protestant Churches as guilty of a dangerous Schism; and likewise the Church of *England* charge the whole Body of *Dissenters* with Breach of Ecclesiastick Unity, and with unwarrantable Separation from them; in like Manner the *present Judicatories* of this National Church, in an Act of their *last Assembly*, condemn the Conduct of the Brethren of the *Associate Presbytery*, as a dangerous *Schism*. The Reverend Author of the *Essay on Separation* endeavours to prove the Justice of the Charge; but how he has succeeded in his Attempt, is afterwards enquired into. And as for the *other* Way of bearing Testimony against the Corruptions of a particular Church, namely, *by continuing in Communion* with such who are carrying on a Course of Defection, and at the same Time *testifying* against the same; the foresaid Author makes some Acknowledgment, that the Church of *Scotland* is worse at this Day than sometime formerly, and that she hath been upon the *Decline* for some Time, *Essay*, p. 59. but he pleads that we ought to contend in a way of Communion with the present Judicatories: Therefore I judge it may give some Light to the Question before us, if we observe, that, when a Testimony is given against the Backslidings of a Church in a way of Communion with the backsliding Party, it must be done in one of the three following Ways; either *doctrinally* from the Pulpit, or by *Protestations* and *Dissents* in Judicatories, or by *Petitions* and *Representations* unto them, by such Ministers or other Church-members as are grieved with their Proceedings. But the present Judicatories of this National Church have *judicially* condemned all these several Ways of testifying against their Procedure; whereby they have upon the Matter demanded from Ministers, and other Church-members, a *silent*

Submission to all their Determinations. The Truth of this will appear from the following short *Narrative*, that I offer, of some *Contentings in a way of Communion with the Judicatories immediately before the Secession was stated*: And, as I go along, I shall also take notice of some considerable *Failings* in pleading the Cause of Truth, while the Testimony was managed only after this Manner; and these had their Rise and Spring in a very great Measure from a prevailing Disposition and Inclination to maintain what was reckoned *Peace* and Ecclesiastical *Unity*.

When the Intrusion of Ministers upon dissenting and reclaiming Congregations in consequence of the *Patronage-act* became frequent, several Presbyteries dealt with *Assemblies*, by *Instructions* given unto their Commissioners, that a Stop might be put to violent Intrusions, and that proper Measures might be taken to prevent the Settlement of Ministers in Congregations without their Call and Consent: But no Regard was had to these Instructions; they were read once or twice in a Committee appointed by the several Assemblies for receiving them, and there they were buried. The violent Settlement of Ministers was at length countenanced and supported by the Authority of the General Assemblies of this Church; therefore some Ministers began to think it needful to testify in a more open and plain Manner against the Violence done to Christian Congregations by the intruding of Ministers upon them: Hence in the Year 1730, when the Case of the Parish of *Hutton*, complaining of a Sentence of the Commission appointing a violent Settlement in that Parish, came before the Assembly that met that Year, they not only refused to reverse the Sentence of the Commission, but likewise appointed the Presbytery of *Chirnside* to proceed to the said Settlement. Several Members of that Assembly *dissented* from the said Sentence, and craved that their *Dissent* might be *recorded*; but this was refused by a *Vote* of the Assembly, and their Clerk was discharged to mark any Dissent in that Matter. I have just now before me the original Subscriptions of several Ministers and Elders to the foresaid Dissent; some of the worthy Ministers are now with the Lord: They were once resolved to have published their Dissent, together with the Names of all such as should sign their Adherence to the same, that there might be some publick standing Testimony against the Injury that was done to the Flock and Heritage of God by the foresaid Sentence of Assembly, and also as a Mean to put some Stop to such violent

lent Proceedings for the Time to come; but this Design was laid aside; the Arguments for maintaining Peace and Unity did prevail, as frequently they do in a declining State of the Church, to the very great Prejudice of a suitable and seasonable Testimony for Truth.

Tho' the Intrusion of Ministers upon Christian Congregations, especially when they are authorised and countenanced by the supreme Judicatories of this National Church, must be reckoned a very considerable Step of Defection from our Reformation-principles; yet an Affair of much greater Consequence came upon the Field, when in the Year 1726 we were alarmed with a flagrant Report, that the *Arian Heresy* had entred into our Borders, and that it was taught in one of our principal *Seminaries* of Learning, the University of *Glasgow*, by Mr. *Simson* Professor of Divinity there: It was likewise reported, that the said Mr. *Simson* continued to teach the same dangerous Errors for which he had been formerly under Process, and which the Assembly *Anno* 1717 had discharged him to vent and teach; tho' in the Act of the said Assembly the Prohibition is laid in very general Terms, and none of his dangerous Propositions, which were owned and maintained by himself in his Answers to the Libel exhibited against him, are either particularly condescended upon, or expressly condemned. The Presbytery of *Glasgow*, having enquired into the Truth of the above Reports, found Ground for a Process against him; and the Prosecution was carried on with the Assistance of a *Committee* appointed by the Assembly that met *Anno* 1726, as also with the Assistance of a *Committee* named for the same Effect by the Assembly *Anno* 1727. When this Affair had been before several Assemblies of this Church, it was found proven, both by the Depositions of Witnesses who heard him, as also by his own Papers and Writings contained in the Process, that he had vented and taught *such Propositions* whereby the great God our Saviour is robbed of his true Deity; as also it was found proven that he had asserted, That *the three Persons of the adorable Trinity were not one Substance in Number*. Likewise the Committee appointed by the Assembly 1727 found it proven, that he had continued to teach the same dangerous Errors for which he was formerly processsed, and whereby many of the important Truths held forth from the Word of God, in our *Confession of Faith*, were subverted. And when this important Affair was referred by the Assembly 1728

unto

unto the several Presbyteries of this National Church, that they might give their Judgment upon it, tho' a great Part of Presbyteries gave it as their Opinion that Mr. *Simson* should be *deposed*, yet the Assembly 1729, who concluded the Process, inflicted no higher Censure upon him than that of *Suspension* from Teaching and Preaching, and all Exercise of any Ecclesiastical Power or Function, until another General Assembly should think fit to take off this Sentence. The late Reverend Mr. *Boston* Minister at *Etterick* read a *Protestation* against the foresaid Conclusion given unto this weighty Affair; but, at the earnest Desire of the Moderator, he took the same under his Consideration till the Meeting of Assembly next Day, and then he did not insist upon it. Several Ministers having entred into a Resolution, that *Instructions* should be brought up from the several Presbyteries to the next Assembly for an *Act assertory* of the Truths of God, to be conceived in such a Manner, as to obviate and condemn the gross Errors taught by Mr. *Simson*, in the Terms and Expressions in which he had vented them; this was proposed as the best Expedient for maintaining Truth, together with our Ecclesiastical Peace and Unity; and, upon this Motion and Resolution, Mr. *Boston* was dealt with to drop his Protestation: But it is to be regreted, that the proper Season of a Testimony against the Injury that was done to Truth, by passing Mr. *Simson* in such a superficial and slight Manner, was lost. By the foresaid Sentence of Assembly he is continued in *Ministerial* and *Christian* Communion, tho' it was found proven that he had blasphemed that Name which is above every Name that is named: And tho' he could easily have satisfied the Presbytery of *Glasgow*, if he had been found in the Faith, before the Commencement of the Process against him; yet, in his very first Letter unto them, he justifies his leading Fallacy, whereby he confounds the *essential Perfections* of God, with the *personal Properties* of the three adorable Persons of the Godhead: And also he continued, by manifold Tergiversations and Shiftings from Year to Year, to refuse to give Satisfaction to the Judicatories, always justifying his Doctrine as agreeable to the Word of God, and our *Confession of Faith*, till he saw that Censure was inevitable; and then he made some general Acknowledgment, but yet he never acknowledged that he had taught any Thing contrary to the Word of God or our *Confession of Faith*. As the foresaid Season of a Testimony for the Honour of the Redeemer, and against
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the Indignity done him, was lost; so some of the Ministers, who, for the above-mentioned Reason, advised Mr. *Boston* to drop his Protestation, were soon very sensible of their Mistake. The *Associate Presbytery*, in their *Judicial Act and Testimony*, do justly reckon the Conclusion given by the Assembly 1729 to the important Affair before them, to be one of the Grounds of the Lord's Controversy against us; and we have every one Reason to be humbled before the Lord, because a suitable Testimony was not given in its proper Season against the above-mentioned Act and Sentence, whereby Mr. *Simson* was dismissed, not only with such a slight Censure for his Errors in the Doctrine of the blessed Trinity, notwithstanding of the above Aggravations of his Crime in shifiting to give due Satisfaction, but also without the least Censure for the many other gross and dangerous Errors he had taught; neither was there any Kind of Testimony given by the said Assembly against them.

Several Presbyteries did, in consequence of the above Motions and Resolutions among some Ministers at the former Assembly, instruct their Commissioners to insist before the Assembly 1730 for a *Warning* against Mr. *Simson's*, and other Errors of the Times, striking against the Fundamentals of our holy Religion: These Instructions were moved in open House, and it was agreed that the Committees of Instructions and Overtures should have them under their Consideration, and that then the Assembly should consider the Matter; but, after all, no particular *Warning* against Error could be obtained, nor any *Act assertory* of the Truths, in Opposition to the Terms in which they had been impugned by Mr. *Simson*. All that was done by that Assembly is contained in their *eighth printed Act*, wherein they recommend it to all Ministers of this Church, "to be careful to warn and guard their
 " People against the spreading of any Errors contrary to
 " the Scriptures and our *Confession of Faith*, and such as
 " are condemned by former General Assemblies of this
 " Church, particularly such as strike against the Funda-
 " mentals of our holy Religion." In the above *Recommendation*, Ministers are directed to warn People against Errors condemned by the *Confession of Faith*, &c. but the Assembly make no *particular* Mention of these Errors; they leave every one to judge what were Errors of that Sort, and what not; and this could nowise answer the End of the above Instructions for a particular *Warning* against
 Error;

Error; neither could it be of Use to support the Truths which were opposed and subverted by Mr. *Simson*, seeing he always maintained that the Propositions vented by him were not contrary to our *Confession of Faith*, but agreeable thereto: Therefore a Motion was made at this Meeting of Assembly, that, for the Sake of Truth, they would assert, in express Terms, the *Necessary Existence of our Lord Jesus Christ*; but this was *refused*, upon a Pretence that the above general Recommendation, to warn People against Errors condemned by the *Confession of Faith*, was sufficient: Upon which a *Protestation* was taken by a Reverend Brother, now one of the seceding Ministers; but thro' Perswasion it was not duly insisted upon. Before I pass the Proceedings of the Assembly 1730, it deserves to be remembred, that tho' the Conclusion given to Mr. *Simson's* Affair was contrary to the declared Minds of a great Number of Presbyteries, yet there was not a *Remonstrance* offered at the Assembly 1730, by any of the Presbyteries of Scotland, against the above Conclusion of the Assembly 1729; yea, it was from a very small Number of Presbyteries that the above Instructions, about a seasonable Warning against Error, were sent. As this was a lamentable Evidence of a silent Submission unto the Decision of the National Assembly in Mr. *Simson's* Affair, so it might be justly constructed that the most Part of Presbyteries had not only let go any Testimony they had given, for a higher Censure to be inflicted upon Mr. *Simson*, but also that a suitable and due Concern for Truth, lying wounded and bleeding in our Streets, was at a very low Ebb amongst us.

A little after the Meeting of the Assembly 1730, a Paper was published, intituled, *An Enquiry into Mr. Simson's Sentiments about the Trinity, from his Papers in Process*. The very Reverend and Learned Author, who is well known in the Church of Scotland, makes it evident from Mr. *Simson's* own Papers, that it is his Opinion, *That the three Persons of the Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are not one Substance in Number, but three distinct Substances*; as also, that it is his Opinion, *that the Father alone is the Self-existent, Necessarily-existent, and Independent Being*; and consequently, *that the Divine Attributes and Titles, such as the Supreme God, the Only true God, in their strict and proper Sense, belong to the Father alone, and are not to be applied unto the Son and Holy Spirit*. The above Enquiry is directed to all the Presbyteries of the Church

of *Scotland*: It was thought that the pathetick and strong Reasoning that it contains, would have had Weight with them to have exerted themselves with more Vigour for the Cause of Truth, against the Meeting of another Assembly; especially when it was found, that the Method of Dealing by *Instructions* had not the desired Effect. Accordingly the Synod of *Perth* and *Stirling*, at their Meeting *April* 1731, drew up a *Petition* concerning Errors in Doctrine, and *Intrusions* into vacant Congregations; and appointed their Brethren, Members of the ensuing Assembly, and others joined with them in Commission, to present the same, and to insist upon it before the Assembly. This *Petition* was presented and read in the Assembly that met *May* 1731; and the Members from the Synod of *Angus*, and Presbyteries of *St. Andrews*, *Dunfermline*, *Aberdeen*, *Kincardine*, *Ellon*, and *Aberlour*, likewise represented, that they had *Instructions* from their respective Constituents to make the like Representations to the Assembly, craving a Warning against Errors in Doctrine, the Growth of Infidelity, &c. But all the above Representations and *Petitions* were referred by that Assembly to their Commission, with Power to them to do concerning the Matters contained in them as they should see Cause, excepting what related to the Method of calling Ministers to vacant Parishes: And the Commission having delayed the Affair from one Meeting to another, till the 9th Day of *March* 1732, upon which Day (as the Extract of their Sentence before me bears) the *Address* of the Synod of *Perth* was read, also *Instructions* from the Presbytery of *St. Andrews* to their Commissioners to the late Assembly; such of the Commissioners from the Synod of *Perth* who were present, were heard. After some Reasoning, the Commission agreed, that a Letter should be writ to all the Presbyteries, earnestly recommending in the Terms of the above-mentioned Act of the Assembly 1730. This was all that was done by the Commission: Whereupon the Reverend Mr. *Alexander Moncrieff* did in his own Name, and in Name of his Constituents, *protest* against the above Sentence, as too general, and not answering the Ends proposed by them.

When the above Methods of Presbyterial and Synodical Instructions and Representations were tried without any Success, a *Representation* and *Petition* to the General Assembly, that met at *Edinburgh* Anno 1732, was signed by above Forty Ministers, and some Ruling Elders, containin

a particular Representation of Grievances, such as the Growth and Spreading of Error, Intrusions into the Ministry, and the Procedure of the Commissions of the General Assemblies, assuming to themselves a Power of appointing Committees for trying and ordaining Ministers in vacant Congregations, not only without the Concurrence and Consent of the Presbyteries and Synods immediately concerned, but also in direct Opposition to their declared Minds; craving likewise, that the Assembly might take proper Measures for the Redress of the above and other Grievances particularly mentioned. The foresaid *Representation* and *Petition* was given in, according to the usual Order, to the *Committee of Bills*, to be by them transmitted to the Assembly; but after long Attendance upon them, till near the Close of the Assembly, they *refused* to *transmit* the same. This obliged such of the Ministers as had a Commission from their Brethren to present the said Representation and Petition, and to insist upon the same, to go to the *Bar* of the *Assembly* with a *Complaint* against their *Committee*, and to crave that the Assembly themselves might do them the Justice, to give their Representation and Petition a *Reading in their Presence*; but this was *stiffly refused*: Whereupon the Reverend Mr. George Gillespie gave in a *Protestation*, signed by himself and Fourteen other Ministers, being all the Petitioners that were then present at *Edinburgh*. In this *Protestation* against the Deed of the Assembly refusing to read their Representation, they express themselves in the following Manner; "We find ourselves obliged much against our Inclination, and with all due Deference to this Venerable Assembly, humbly to protest in our own Name, and in Name of all concurring in the said Representation, or adhering, against the said Deed; and for Preservation of the just Rights belonging to us as Men, Christians, and Office-bearers in this Church (by the Light of Nature, Word of God, Constitutions of this Church, Claim of Right, Laws of the Land, and manifold approved Precedents since the Reformation to this Day) to have Representations and Petitions anent Grievances, which are or may be offered by ourselves or others to the General Assembly or other Judicatories of this Church, received, openly read, and taken into serious Consideration by the said Courts for Redress, &c." But neither was this *Protestation*, tho' given in under Form of *Instrument*, regarded, or allowed to be

marked. The Representation and Petition, together with their Protestation, were immediately published, and are extant in Print.

From the above Words of the Protestation, it is evident, that the *protesting Ministers* reckoned themselves *denied a just Right* belonging to them as *Men, Christians, &c.* by the Light of Nature, &c. Yet the Reverend Mr. Currie, who *signed* this Protestation, has not in all his *Essay* found the present Judicatories guilty of one *single Act* of *Tyranny* in the Administration. It is proper likewise here to observe, that at the same Time (and, I can well affirm, without any Concert with the Ministers, and therefore by a special Direction of Divine Providence) a *Representation and Petition* was given in to the same Assembly, signed by above *Fifteen hundred People*, Members of this Church, many of them bearing the Office of *Elders*, tho' they do not design themselves such, as appears from their Subscriptions to their Paper now printed; but their Representation and Petition could not get the Credit of a Transmitt to the Assembly: Therefore their Commissioners came to the Bar of the Assembly, and craved that their Petition might get a Reading in their Presence; but this was positively refused; whereupon they likewise *protested* against the Refusal. It was justly reckoned an Instance of Tyranny in the *two Reigns* preceeding the Revolution, that the Subjects were discharged to petition for the Redress of Grievances; and therefore this their just Privilege was restored them by our valuable *Claim of Right*. Tho' our Assemblies have not under Ecclesiastical Pains prohibited the Members of this Church to petition them, yet the *Contempt* with which so many Ministers and Members of the Church were treat, when they came in a regular and orderly Manner to the Bar of the Assembly, falls *little short* of the *Tyranny* of the above-mentioned Reigns; and it is a manifest Evidence that the Assembly 1732 did condemn this Way of Testifying by humble Representations and Petitions against the Course of Backsliding and Defection, that the Judicatories were carrying on with a very high Hand: We shall scarce find a Parallel to it in any well-governed Civil Society, and was very unbecoming any Ecclesiastical Judicatory, who have only a *Ministerial Power* and Authority given them by the Head of the Church for the Edification of his Body, and who ought to exercise that Power and Authority for the Redress of such Grievances as any Member

ber of the Body brings before them. Tho' the above arbitrary Step might have been justly reckoned a Ground of Secession from such Judicatories, who had so little Regard unto, yea, who poured so much Contempt and Scorn upon, such a considerable Number of the Members of the Ecclesiastical Body, when they came before them with their mournful Complaints; yet, notwithstanding of this, we continued still to contend in a Way of Communion and Conjunction with them.

When Testimonies by Representations and Petitions were so little regarded, several Ministers judged it their Duty to testify more plainly from the Pulpit against the Course that the Judicatories were taking: Accordingly the Reverend Mr. *Ebenezer Erskine* did at the Opening of the Synod of *Perth and Stirling*, October 1732, testify doctrinally against the Act of Assembly past that Year anent the Method of calling Ministers, as also against the Proceedings of Church-judicatories in imposing Ministers upon dissenting and reclaiming Congregations; but that Synod condemned his Doctrine, and appointed him to be rebuked at their Bar, for the faithful Freedom he used: Upon which he appealed from them to the General Assembly that met at *Edinburgh* 1733; and that Assembly affirmed the Sentence of the Synod, and appointed him to be rebuked at their Bar for *impugning*, in his Sermon before the Synod, *Acts of Assembly*, and *Proceedings of Church-Judicatories*. Now, the Door is shut against doctrinal Testimonies, and the Mouths of Ministers are stop't: If they testify from the Pulpit against the Proceedings of Judicatories however arbitrary they may be, or against Acts of Assemblies however opposite to our Reformation-principles and Purity, they must lay their Account with Church-censure. When Mr. *Erskine* and three other Ministers perceived this, they judged it their Duty to protest, for their own just and necessary Exoneration, against the foresaid Act and Sentence: But this Way of testifying is immediately condemned in a most severe and arbitrary Manner; the Assembly appoint their Commission to suspend the four protesting Ministers, in case they do not retract their Protestation, and declare their Sorrow for the same; and, in case the foresaid Ministers act contrary to the Sentence of Suspension, the Commission is appointed to proceed to a higher Censure against them.

Notwithstanding of the above unjust Sentence, the four protesting Ministers continued to testify in a Way of
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Communion with the Judicatories: Therefore, at the Meeting of Commission in *August* foresaid Year, they gave in two several *Representations*; one of them was read, but the other was refused a Reading: The *Representations* are in Print, and speak for themselves. Only, I must notice, that, in both their *Representations*, they not only give the Reasons why they could not retract their Protestation, but also they judged it their Duty to enlarge their Testimony in several particular Instances; and, amongst others, they make Mention of the gross Errors that had been vented and taught by Mr. *Simson*, and of the Conduct of Judicatories in dismissing him from their Bar without a suitable Testimony against his Errors. Thus they do not confine their Testimony to violent Settlements, but upon the Matter take in what had been contained in *Instructions*, *Representations* and *Petitions* laid before former Assemblies: But, at the foresaid Meeting of Commission, the Sentence of *Suspension* past by the Assembly was execute against them; and, in *November* thereafter, they were thrust out from Communion with the Judicatories, with their above Testimony in their Hands: Whereupon they gave in a *Protestation*, declaring a SECESSION from the Party who were carrying on a Course of Defection from our reformed and covenanted Principles; as the said Protestation more fully bears. From what is above narrated, the Reader may see, that there has been a *Series* and *Tract* of Testifying in a Way of Communion and Conjunction with the Judicatories, before a *Secession* from them was declared; as also he may see, that the ordinary Means of testifying in a Way of Church-communion stand judicially condemned by the present Judicatories: As for Instance, when many Ministers, and many other Church-members, came to the Bar of the Assembly with *Representations* and *Petitions*, these are despised and quite disregarded; and therefore this Way of testifying stands materially condemned. When a doctrinal Testimony is emitted against a Course of Defection, this is expressly condemned by the Assembly 1733; and, when a *Protestation* for Exoneration is entred against the said condemnatory Sentence, this is also severely censured by the foresaid Assembly. And tho' it may be justly affirmed, that any of the Members of the Ecclesiastick Body have a just Claim to protest against any Determination and Decision of the supreme Judicatory, which are opposite unto, or a Deviation from our Reformation-principles and Purity: yet this Privilege has been denied even

the Members of that Court; they have been always refused the Liberty of having their *Dissents* recorded, except in two Cases *Anno* 1737. And it does not appear to be the Judgment of that Assembly, that Dissents with the Reasons of them should be recorded; in regard they instructed their Commission to prepare the Draught of an Overture against next Assembly, to be transmitted to Presbyteries, to know their Opinion whether Dissents, with the Reasons of them, should be insert in the Registers of Assembly, or not; and accordingly, tho' two Dissents with their Reasons were marked *Anno* 1737, yet the Assembly 1738 refused that Privilege. From what is above observed, it is evident, that the present Judicatories were bent upon their backsliding Course, before any Secession was declared from them; and that they not only condemned and despised all the ordinary Means of testifying in a way of Communion with them, but that they came the Length of *thrusting out* some Ministers from their Communion; for no other Reason but because they judged it their Duty to bear Testimony against their Course and Way. And tho' the Judicatories are not to this Day reforming, nor returning to the Lord; yet the Cry is now, as it was then, for Union and Conjunction with them; and against *Secession* from them, as an unwarrantable Separation and an unaccountable Schism. I must here also observe from the fore-said Narrative, that tho' there was no Secession stated, till, by the overruling and adorable Providence of God, some Ministers were thrust out by the Judicatories themselves; yet I humbly judge there was too much Ground given for Secession *before that Event*: As for Instance, when the Assembly 1729 kept in Ministerial and Christian Communion with them, *one* who had derogate from the essential Glory of the Son of God, and who had continued to vent and teach several other gross and dangerous Errors; especially when the two following Assemblies, tho' dealt with for that End, refused an *Act assertory* of the Truths, in Opposition unto the Terms in which they had been opposed, or a *seasonable Warning* against the Errors of the Times: As also I judge, that the *Grounds* of *Secession* were yet more enlarged, when the Assembly 1732 refused to give a Hearing to so many Church-members, who represented their Grievances to them, and petitioned for Redress; and yet more, when the Assembly 1733 condemned a *doctrinal* Testimony for Truth, and sentenced some Ministers to Censure for *protesting* for their just Rights and Privileges. After all,

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when the Secession was not declared, till some Ministers were thrust out from their Communion merely for contending against a Course of Defection; it is a manifest Evidence, that they have not been precipitant nor rash in their Secession; they have not *gone out with Haste*, neither have they *gone out by Flight*. They were brought at first into their present Situation by the adorable Providence of God; and this is the *Question* that is now before us, Whether or not it is their *Duty* to contend for Truth, and against present and former Defections, in a *way of Secession* from the present Judicatories of this National Church? or, which is the same Thing, Whether or not it is their Duty to continue to testify against a Course of Defection, in the present Situation into which they have been brought by the holy and wise Providence of God? and consequently, Whether or not it is the Duty of such *other Brethren* in the Ministry, and of *Professors* through the Land, who desire to cleave to *Scotland's* covenanted Reformation, to *join Hands* with them in the foresaid Testimony and Manner of testifying? This leads me to observe in last Place, That, when the Secession was stated at first, the protesting Ministers declared their Readiness to hold Communion with all and every one “who were adhering to the Principles of “the true Presbyterian covenanted Church of *Scotland*, in her “*Doctrine, Worship, Government and Discipline*,” and “who “were groining under the Evils, and affected with the Grievances complained of, and in their several Spheres were “wrestling against the same.” But it is Matter of Regrete, that so many who have sometime appeared against a Course of Defection, and amongst others the *Author* of the *Essay*, are involving themselves in the Sins of the Judicatories, either by justifying or extenuating their Defections, or by their continuing in Conjunction with them, tho’ they are still going on in a Course of Backsliding, and refuse to be reclaimed; whereby the Door of Communion with them is more and more shut. But I proceed to consider more particularly the *State* of the *Question*, and the *Reasons* and *Grounds* of our present *Secession*, which I hope will be found to be warranted by the *Word of God*, and the *Acts* and *Constitutions* of the Church of *Scotland* agreeable thereto.

CHAP. I.

Wherein the true State of the Question concerning Seceſſion from the preſent Judi- catories is enquired into.

A S unwarrantable Separation from any particular Church is both ſinful and dangerous; ſo Conjunction with a backſliding and corrupt Church, either in her Backſlidings and Corruptions, or to the Prejudice of Truth, and of a ſuitable Teſtimony againſt ſuch Corruptions and Backſlidings, is diſhonouring to God, hurtful to Mens Souls, and the greateſt Injury that can be done to our Poſterity. The Reverend Author of the *Essay* againſt Separation thinks fit to begin his Performance with a Citation from Mr. *Shiells* in his Account of the Life of Mr. *Renwick*; *It is Miniſters Duty to ſhew People how great a Sin Schiſm is* *. Here our Author ſtops; but I hope it will not be impertinent to tranſcribe what Mr. *Shiells* ſubjoins to the above Words, “ And in this Endeavour to clear and condemn true *Schiſm*, and to preſs true *Union*, Mr. *Renwick* was not wanting; but he thought it alſo neceſſary to teach People, not to call every Thing *Schiſm* which the World calls by that Name, otherwiſe he would have condemned all the moſt innocent Withdrawings from the Corruptions and Deſections of Men that ever were in the World, even ſuch Separations which the Mouth of the Lord hath commanded from unequally yoked Fellowſhips; and thought it likewiſe needful to ſhew, that ſtanding ſtill in an Adherence to the Reformation, and reſuſing to concur with the backſliding Part of a Church, tho’ the greateſt Part, when Union and Communion with them cannot be kept up without Sin, or without being induced or ſeduced from formerly attained Integrity, when the Separation is in that which a National Church hath commanded all her Members to diſown, by her ſtanding Acts and Authority, is not Schiſm nor ſinful Separation: He thought it alſo needful to warn, that the Wrath of God is not far off from them who make and cheriſh ſinful Communion, and partake of Miniſters Sins, which in many Caſes the Scripture ſays will bring Wrath upon the People, *Lev. x. 6. Iſa. ix. 16. Iſa. xliii. 27, 28. Jer. ii. 8, 9. Jer. xiv. 15,*

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“ 16;

* *Renwick’s Life*, p. 107.

“ 16, &c.” If the *Author* of the *Essay* thinks it his Duty to attempt a Discovery of the Evil of *Schism*, I hope I shall be excused, when I give my *Reasons* why I think our *Secession* from the present Judicatories of the Church is both *warrantable* and *necessary*, and consequently why I cannot reckon that to be *Schism* which he and many others call by that Name; but, unless the *Question* is clearly stated, the Reader cannot have a distinct View of the Case as it stands betwixt the present Judicatories of the Church and the seceding Ministers: Therefore, in order to this, I shall first offer a few *Observes* concerning the *Church* and *Church-communion*; and then I shall examine into the Way how the Author of the *Essay* states the Question, and shew that it is *mis-stated* by him; and, under this Head, I may take notice of some *lax Principles* with respect to Church-communion, that are either directly affirmed, or by just and necessary Consequence flow from some Positions laid down in the *Essay*; and, in the last Place, I shall endeavour to declare the true *State* of the present Question.

S E C T. I.

Some Observes concerning the Church and Church-Communion.

THE Terms *Church*, and *Church-communion*, do frequently cast up in the present Question: I shall therefore offer a few *Observes* concerning them, which may be necessary for the Reader to have in his Eye, if he would be informed in the Question betwixt the present *Judicatories*, and those who have stated a *Secession* from them; and I hope I shall advance nothing upon this Head, but what is agreeable unto our laudable Acts and Constitutions, and what sound Presbyterians, who know their own Principles, will readily agree unto.

1. When I speak of the *Church* in the present Question, I do not mean the Church *invisible*, but the *visible* Body of Christ; and this may be considered either as it is *Catholick* and Universal, or it may be taken for *particular* Churches.

2. The *Catholick visible Church* consists of all those throughout the World that profess the true Religion, and of their Children; and is the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the House and Family of God, out of which there is no ordinary Possibility of Salvation; according to our

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Conf. Chap. 25. § 2. Unto this Catholick visible Church; the Lord Christ, her only Head, Lord and Lawgiver, hath given the Ministry, Oracles, and Ordinances of God, for the gathering and perfecting of the Saints in this Life to the End of the World; according to the foresaid Chapter of our *Confession*, § 3. and the Scriptures cited.

3. As there is a Catholick visible Church, so there are *particular visible Churches*; and these are either *National*, *Provincial*, *Presbyterial*, or *Parochial*: And tho' every particular Church may be considered as a visible Body, in respect of its own Members, Order and Government; yet at the same Time, if any particular Church, whether National or Presbyterial, is considered with relation to the whole visible Body of Christ, it is only a *Member* thereof; that is, every particular visible Church stands in relation to the Catholick Body, as a *Part* unto the *Whole*: This necessarily flows from the *Unity* or *Oneness* of the whole visible Body of Christ.

4. Particular Churches, which are Members of the Catholick Church, are *more or less pure*, according as the Doctrine of the Gospel is taught and embraced, Ordinances administrate, and publick Worship performed more or less purely in them; according to our *Confession*, Chap. 25. § 4. As in the natural Body a Member may be impotent and inactive, or may be seized with a dangerous and corrupt Ulcer; this may be the Case likewise of particular Churches which are Members of the Catholick Body. As for Instance, A National Church, as she is represented in her Judicatories, may fall into such a State of Inactivity, whereby she does not at all answer the Ends and Designs of her Erection into a Church-state, namely, the Glory of God, the Support and Defence of the Truths of the Gospel, and the Edification of the Body of Christ: Yea, a National Church may so far decline from that Soundness and Purity she has once attained unto, that she may be justly reckoned an *impure* or *corrupt* Member of the *Catholick* Body.

5. The Divine Warrant for National or Presbyterial Churches is not disputed by these with whom I have immediately to do: The Reader, for his own Satisfaction upon the Head of National Churches, may consult the judicious Mr. *Durham* in his *Commentary* on *Rev.* xi. 15. where he will find the Question handled succinctly, and with a great deal of Judgment; and, upon the Head of Presbyterial Churches, he may consider what is said in

our *Form of Church-government*. But it may not be amiss here to observe what is meant by a *National Church*: A National Church, says Mr. *Durham* in the Place above-named, is *the Combination of a Nation as one unto God*; "and Nations or Kingdoms are said to become the Lord's upon the Sounding of the seventh Trumpet, as formerly they were Antichrist's." Formerly they belonged to Antichrist, by an outward visible Profession of the Doctrines of the Church of *Rome*, the Practice of her idolatrous Worship, and Subjection to the Papal Power and Authority; but now they become the Lord's, "by the publick Profession of Truth in its Purity, and by having his publick Worship and Ordinances in their Purity, nationally among them." The Reverend and Worthy Author of the *Defence of National Churches*, published Anno 1729. p. 13. describes a National Church thus; "When a Nation with its Rulers and Generality of the People do agree to receive the Gospel, profess its Truths, and subject themselves unto its Ordinances; that is, when they join and unite together in one Ecclesiastick Body, for maintaining the same System of Doctrines, and Rules for Church-government and Worship, as they judge most agreeable to the Word of God." As a National Church respects those who are joined together in the same Civil Society by the Providence of God, who hath before determined the Bounds of our Habitation; so it includes their Union and Conjunction together in one Body Ecclesiastick, for the Maintenance of the same System of Doctrines, and Rules for Church-government and Worship, or, which is the same, their joint Profession and Confession of the same Faith, and embracing the same Ordinances of Worship, and submitting to the same Order and Government.

6. The publick Profession and Confession of the Truths of God, is one of the peculiar Characteristicks of the Church of the living God; she is designed the Pillar and Ground of Truth, 1 Tim. iii. 15. that is, the Church is a publick Witness unto the Truth, a publick Keeper and Notifier of the Truth. In the above Words there is an Allusion unto a Custom among the Antients, who in their publick Places and Courts of Judgment had Pillars unto which the Edicts of Magistrates were fixed, that all might see, read and know them: And by Truth, in this Place, we are not only to understand the Doctrines which ought to be believed, but likewise the Truth as it con-
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cerns the *Worship* that ought to be practised, and that *Order and Government* that should be exercised in the House of God; all the Acts, Statutes, Ordinances and Institutions of the Head and Lord of the House, ought to be plainly and clearly published, especially by the Church-representative, or by the Office-bearers of the Church in their Judicative Capacity, that they may be read, known, and embraced by all the Members of the Body. The Church ought to *bear-Testimony* and Witness, in a *particular and express Manner*, to these *Truths* that are *controverted* and opposed by the Subtilty of Men, or the Wickedness of Hell; this is a Debt that Zion owes to her God, to make publick Profession and Confession of him and his Truths, *Psal. cxlvii. 12. Praise thy God, O Zion*; or, as it is emphatically rendred in our *Paraphrase* which we sing, *Zion, thy God confess*. As this is a special Charge given unto her, so it is the Church's greatest Dignity and Honour to confess him; if she refuses or neglects to *confess* his *controverted* and opposed Truths, he is exceedingly dishonoured, and she does not answer one of the primary Ends and Designs of her Erection and Constitution upon this Earth. When the Lord did with an outstretched Arm bring the *Protestant Churches* out of spiritual *Babylon*, they came forth with a *Testimony* in their Hands against the Abominations of *Rome*; the several Churches emitted their *Confessions* of Faith, and in them the Banner was displayed for Truth, and the Standard of a publick Testimony was lifted up against the abominable Doctrines, and the tyrannical Usurpations of the Church of *Rome*. That *Harmony* is beautiful which we may observe amongst the several *Confessions* of the reformed Churches, and an Evidence that there was a special Presence of God with them, and also of a plentiful Effusion of the holy Spirit upon them; it is likewise a hopeful Presage, that when the Lord turns again the Captivity of Zion, and when his holy Arm shall give the Blow unto the *Throne of the Beast*, the several Churches and their Watchmen shall see Eye to Eye, and that with the Voice together they shall sing. I conclude this Head with observing, That the *National Church of Scotland*, in her reforming Times, was a *confessing Church* in a peculiar Manner: Not only was her *first Confession* of Faith received and published, as the Confession of the Faith of the *States of Scotland, with the Inhabitants of the same professing Christ Jesus his holy Gospel*; but this Confession was

ratified with a *solemn Oath*, frequently renewed, as also the Abominations of Popery were particularly abjured. Hence all Ranks of Persons, and all the Members of this Church come to the Years of Discretion, did, by their Hands lifted up to the most high God, become *Confessors*, in an eminent Way and Manner, of the Lord Jesus, and of his precious Truths: This solemn Profession and Confession of the Truth was in reforming Times the outward Bond of Union and Communion, both unto Church-members among themselves, and unto the Office-bearers of this Church in her several Judicatories; but whether the Church of *Scotland* at this Day, in her several Members, or as she is represented in her present Judicatories, is a *witnessing* and *confessing* Church, in Opposition to the Errors and Corruptions of the present Age, will afterward fall under our Consideration.

7. There is an *Union and Communion Catholick and Universal amongst all Christians, considered as such*; and an *Ecclesiastick Union and Communion amongst Members of one particular Organical Church, considered as Members of that Church*. This Observe I take from Mr. *Spiells* on *Church-communion*, p. 25. a Book frequently cited in the *Essay*. The same worthy Author likewise observes, that "*Organick Communion* must be on stricter Terms than *Catholick Communion* with others that are not Members of the same Organick Church." He adds, "If we were in *Africk* or *Asia*, we would join with all Christians holding the same fundamental Testimony against *Jews*, *Turks* and *Pagans*, tho' not with Hereticks." And it is plain, that all Christians have Union and Communion together, in so far as they hold the fundamental Testimony of Christianity against declared Infidels; in like Manner all Protestants, in so far as they hold the Protestant Testimony against the Errors and Corruptions of the Church of *Rome*. But tho' all the Members of the Catholick visible Church, professing the true Religion, have Union and Communion among themselves, in their joint Profession of the same Lord, and the same Faith, and in receiving the same Baptism; yet, as a considerable Divine expresses himself *, "*The Obligation that lies upon Members of the same particular visible Church, to hold Communion with these with whom they are externally joined, is not without its Bounds and Measures; we are joined together under certain Conditions.*"

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* *Le Claud's Hist. Def. Part 3. p. 9.*

tions and Means of our external Union and Conjunction, in this particular *Organick Church*, are, *one Confession of Faith*, *one Form and Order of Church-government and Discipline*, *one Directory for Worship*; or, The outward Ligament and Bond of our Union and Conjunction in this National Church, is that System of pure and sound Doctrine, that Order of Government, Worship and Discipline, held forth from the Word of God, in our *Confession of Faith*, *Books of Discipline*, *Form of Church-government*, and *Directory for Worship*, in the Profession and Obedience of which all Ranks of Persons in this Land have solemnly bound and obliged themselves to abide, by the *National Covenant of Scotland*, and the *Solemn League and Covenant* of the three Nations. Whether this Bond of our Ecclesiastical Union is maintained by this National Church in her present Judicatories, and consequently whether or not the Conditions of our Union and Conjunction in one Ecclesiastical Body do now subsist, will likewise fall afterwards under our Consideration.

S E C T. II.

The Question mis-stated, and several lax Principles anent Church-communion maintained, in the Essay.

WHEN the Commission of the General Assembly did by their Sentence, as is noticed already, *thrust out* four Ministers from Communion with the present Judicatories, the said Ministers did at the same Time declare a *Secession* from them, and that because they were carrying on a Course of Defection from our Reformed and Covenanted Principles. Therefore it is a very great Mistake in the *Essay*, and a mis-stating of the Question, when he affirms, that *violent Intrusions* were at that Time the chief Ground of the Complaint, p. 6. Violent Intrusions were indeed one of the Grounds of Complaint; but many other Steps of Defection were likewise complained of, as appears from what has been narrated in the *Introduction*; and, amongst others, the Injury that was done to many important doctrinal Truths by the Conduct of Judicatories, when gross Errors were brought to their Bar: And, I humbly judge, the Blow that was thereby given to the Truths, held forth from the Word of God in our *Confession of Faith*, deserves to be reckoned amongst the chief Grounds

Grounds of Complaint; tho', as we shall afterwards see, this, as well as other Steps of Defection, make but very little Impression upon the Author of this *Essay*. From what is above observed, it is also plain, that it was not violent Intrusions, it was not the Act 1732, neither was it any other particular Step of Defection, considered *abstractly* and by themselves, upon which the *Secession* was stated; but a *complex Course* of Defection, both in Doctrine, Government and Discipline, carried on with a *high Hand* by the present Judicatories of this Church, justifying themselves in their Procedure, and refusing to be reclaimed. Hence in our *first Testimony*, wherein we give the Reasons at large for our Protestation, bearing our Secession from the present Judicatories, we lay the Charge against them †, "Of breaking down our beautiful Presbyterian Constitution, and of pursuing such Measures as actually corrupt, or have the most direct Tendency to corrupt, the Doctrine contained in our *Confession of Faith*, as also of imposing new Terms of Communion;" and we observe, "That all this is done contrary to their solemn Engagements when ordained to the holy Ministry, notwithstanding that the ordinary Means had been used to reclaim them, till at length Matters were come to such a Height, that we were excluded from keeping up a standing Testimony against their Defections in a Way of Communion with them." The above Charge is made good by Arguments taken from Matters of Fact in the foresaid Paper: I may leave it to the unprejudiced Reader, who has been at Pains to inform himself in this Controversy, to judge, whether or not the Author of the *Essay* has ever once entred into the Question or Argument as it is more fully stated in the foresaid Paper.

The Author of the *Essay* proceeds in his fifth Chapter to his Arguments against Separation. Tho' he has never stated the Question concerning Secession, as the Case stands betwixt the present Judicatories and the Associate Presbytery; yet, lest he alledge that this is done in his first four Chapters, in the several Principles and Propositions that he has laid down, I shall briefly examine some of his *leading Principles*, which, I hope to make evident, are partly *general* and *ambiguous*, and others of them exceeding *lax*, and therefore, instead of giving us a just View of the State of the Question, have a native Tendency, either to intangle and insnare his Reader, or to amuse and perplex him.

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† *First Testimony*, p. 46.

The Essay is begun with the following Assertion; "That Separation from a true Church is not only a great Misery, but a grand Sin." This is everywhere affirmed through the *Essay*, as p. 7. Prop. 3. "Tho' Separation from a true Church be a great Sin, &c." and very much Weight and Stress is laid upon it. But the Author has given no determinate Sense of the Terms *true Church*, nay, they are used by our Author in a very general and equivocal Sense. Our Divines, in speaking of the *Church*, tell us, That a particular visible Church may be considered, either as she is a *true Church*, or as she is a *pure Church*; and, when they speak of a pure Church, they do not mean a *perfect Church*, but a Church that, thro' the Goodness and Mercy of God, has attained to such a Measure of Conformity to the Divine Pattern, in her Doctrine, Worship, Government and Discipline, that the Denomination of *Pure* may be justly given unto her, tho' she has not yet attained unto a State of Perfection. Thus the learned *Turretine*, in the Place cited by our Author *, *Essay* p. 4. distinguishes betwixt a true Church and a pure Church; after giving the Marks of a true Church, he observes, "That sometimes Hay and Stubble may be built upon the Foundation, and yet a Church is not thereby immediately deprived of the Dignity of being a Church; and, tho' she cannot be any more reckoned a pure Church, she does not therefore cease to be a true Church." Our *Presbyterian* Divines have likewise observed, That tho' a Church may have all these Things that are essential to the Being of a Church, yet there may be Ground of Seccession from her. So Mr. *Forester*, in his Book cited by our Author, affirms ‡, "Every Separation is not sinful, even from a Church which hath the Essentials, yea, and more than the Essentials." And consequently, according to this learned Man, what our Author advances, *Essay* p. 4. is nowise to the Purpose, when he says, "I humbly think, none who knows what orthodox Divines reckon essential to the Being of a true Church of Christ, but will readily own all that and much more is to be found in the Church of Scotland." Our Author has never told us what *orthodox Divines* reckon essential to the Being of a Church; but tho' he should prove that the Church of Scotland in her present Judicatories has the *Essentials*, yea,

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* *Tur.* Loc. 18. Quest. 12. Sect. 7. ‡ *Ref. Inst.* Dial. 3. p. 7.

more than the Essentials, it will not hence follow, according to Mr. *Forester*, that there is *no Ground* of *Secession* from them. If then by a *true Church*, and a Church having the Things that are reckoned *essential* to the *Being* of a *true Church*, our Author means a Church wherein such Doctrines as are absolutely necessary to be known and believed in order to Salvation, are held, at least by external visible Profession; then I affirm it is *false*, that a *Separation* from such a Church is always a great Misery and *grand Sin*; for this Reason, That such *Hay* and *Stubble* may be built upon the Foundation, and such Corruptions both in Government and Discipline may be introduced, as may make it necessary and warrantable to depart from Communion with her. Thus the Church of *England* holds the Truth in her *doctrinal* Articles; but, besides her Corruptions in Government, Worship and Discipline, she has always *declined* to *testify* against many gross and hainous Errors which have been vented and taught by her Members, and which are directly contrary to her own received and approved Articles: Therefore a *Secession* has been justly stated from her by a considerable Body of *Dissenters* in *England* and *Ireland*, by some of them upon all of the Grounds above-mentioned, tho' by the Generality of them on Account of her Corruption in her Government and Worship. But if, by a *true Church*, our Author means a Church that has attained to the Purity above-mentioned; As this is the Meaning of the Terms *true Kirk*, in the 18th Article of our first *Confession of Faith*, as is evident from the Marks and Characters there given, so our Author will never be able to prove that they are to be found in this National Church as she is now represented in her present Judicatories. The Characters of a true Church, mentioned in the fore said Article of our *Confession*, hold forth unto us a pure and sound Church; a Church holding the Head, displaying the Banner of Truth against the Adversaries of Truth; a Church wherein Ecclesiastical Discipline is exercised, for the Edification, and not for the Destruction of the Body of Christ; and finally, a Church wherein the Seals of the Covenant are dispensed by such as are lawfully called, and authorised by the Head and Lord of the House to feed the Sheep of his Pasture. But I have made it already appear in Part, in the *Postscript* to the *Letter on Secession*, that these Characters do not agree to this National Church in her present Situation, and it may be more evident from what is afterwards to be advanced.

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The Author of the *Essay* proceeds in his *second* Chapter to lay down sundry *Propositions* anent *Separation*. I shall pass his *first* Proposition just now. His *second* Proposition runs in the following Terms; "*There may be different Sentiments without Separation.*" This is a fair General; But, when he comes to the Illustration of it, he tells us, "As long as we see but in Part, as we think others should allow us to differ from them, we ought to forbear such as differ from us, I mean, in Things not fundamental." The Terms *fundamental* and *not fundamental* likewise run throughout his whole *Essay*, as p. 16, 113, &c. But, as he gives us no determinate Sense or Meaning of the above Terms, so he leaves us in the Dark about this *Forbearance* which he recommends, when the Difference is in Things *not fundamental*: Therefore I ask that he may explain himself about *Fundamentals*, and let him tell us plainly whether he confines Fundamentals unto *doctrinal* Truths only, and if he gives up with the Foundations of *Government* and *Order* in the House of God; or if his Meaning be, that, when the Foundations of *Doctrine* are maintained, we must *forbear* a *Testimony* when the Foundations of *Order* and *Government* are *subverted*. If he or any shall affirm, that we must continue in Conjunction with such, or forbear a *Testimony* against them, who are subverting the Foundations of *Government* in the House of God, it is plainly contrary to the Scriptures he names, *Phil. iii. 16. Whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same Rule.* If we forbear to testify in the Case mentioned, it is plain we depart from what we have attained unto, and consequently do not walk by the *Rule*. It is contrary to *Eph. iv. 2. Forbearing one another in Love.* It would be a Dishonour done to the Head of the Church, and the greatest Act of Unkindness unto such as bear the Character of Office-bearers, to suffer them to raze the Foundations of *Government* and *Discipline*, without a suitable *Testimony* against them. Again, when our Author pleads for *Forbearance* in Things *not fundamental*, must no *Testimony* be given against doctrinal Errors, except such as are strictly fundamental? Our Divines do very well observe, That there are some Truths that are like the *Stones* that ly *immediately* upon the *Foundation*; and, if these are pulled out, the whole Building falls to the Ground, as if the Foundation were removed. Likewise, is there not a near Connection betwixt one Divine Truth and another? And, have not some Truths that probably some may reckon

not fundamental, a very near Influence upon such as they cannot refuse are *fundamental*? As for Instance, How many sacred Truths are connected with that of the *federal Headship* of the *first Adam*? The Denial of this one Truth brings forth Abundance of dangerous Errors in Divinity, yea, even such as may strike at the Foundation. Our reformed Divines have justly refused to answer the unreasonable Demand of the *Papists*, who, in their controversial Writings against us, have required a *List* of these Truths that we reckon fundamental, for the above Reason, *viz.* the near Connection of Divine Truths with one another; and, for the very same Reason, I humbly judge, that it is very dangerous to plead with our Author for a Forbearance in these Things that are not fundamental: Besides the Difficulty that there is in determining what these Truths are that are *not fundamental*, the Forbearance pled for opens a Door for Ecclesiastical Union and Conjunction in a Church, when she is letting go many important Truths which she has once received and confessed. I shall only add upon this Head, That if the Author of the *Essay*, or any others, shall be found picking out the *Pinnings* of the Building of the Lord's House, or breaking down the Walls of his Vineyard, they deserve not to be *joined with* in building the House, or keeping the Vineyard, more than they who are rearing up a *Fabrick without a Foundation*, or *pulling up the Vines*; yea, in many Cases the *former* are more dangerous than the *latter*.

I have already made an Observe on his third Proposition. His *fourth* is as follows; "*Communion may be kept with a Church, tho' her Faults and Corruptions be many.*" What is immediately added, for Illustration of this Proposition, leaves us still in the Dark about the true State of the Question: "For (*says he*) we are not to expect a perfect or faultless Church here upon Earth." But, tho' we are not to expect a perfect or faultless Church, must we therefore continue in Conjunction with such Judicatories as are carrying on a Course of Defection, and thereby involving themselves and Church-members in many Corruptions, and at the same Time justifying themselves in their Backslidings, and refusing to be reclaimed? As this is the Question before us, so the human Authorities he brings forth upon this Proposition are nowise to the Purpose, as the Reader may easily see. As for the Scripture-examples of the Churches of *Corinth*, *Pergamos*, &c. they are frequent-

quently cast up by our Author; but they teach no such Thing as Conjunction with a Church in the Circumstances above-mentioned, as may be made more fully afterwards to appear. The Words of our *Confession*, Chap. 25. Sect. 5. cited by our Author, *The purest Churches under Heaven are subject both to Mixture and Error*, are most true; and it is likewise a certain Truth which follows, *Some have so degenerated as to become no Churches of Christ, but Synagogues of Satan*: But it nowise follows from any of the above Words of our *Confession*, that we are to continue in Conjunction with a Church, when she degenerates from Truth to Error, or departs from her Purity, and involves herself in Corruption.

Our Author's *fifth* Proposition is, *Tho' we are not to separate from a true Church of Christ, altho' her Faults or Corruptions be many; yet we are obliged to separate from all the Corruptions which may be in a Church*. He adds, "To separate from Corruptions is one Thing, and to separate from the Corrupted is another Thing." In the Illustration of this Proposition, we have several warm Expressions against the least Compliance with any Thing that is sinful; yet our Author's Proposition appears to me to be equally *ambiguous* with those I have already mentioned: It supposeth a Church may be a *true Church*, and yet that her Faults and Corruptions may be *many*; she must then certainly be a very *impure Church*: But, if *true Church* is taken in the large Sense above-mentioned, I shall not controvert it, that an impure Church may be called a true Church. Therefore, if our Author had spoke plainly upon this Proposition, he ought to have told us what kind of Faults and Corruptions he means, when he tells us, *We are not to separate from a true Church, tho' her Faults and Corruptions be many*. If by Faults and Corruptions he means *personal* Defects and Blemishes in the Walk and Conversation of Professors, I shall grant him that these are not Ground of Secession from a true Church; but if by Faults and Corruptions he means *dangerous Errors* or gross Scandals which a Church refuseth to purge out notwithstanding of Warnings and Admonitions given her, or Defections and Backslidings carried on in her Ecclesiastick Capacity from Points of Reformation once attained unto, then his Proposition is what we use to call a *Begging of the Question*. When he tells us, That to separate from Corruptions is one Thing, and to separate from the Corrupted is another; I ask him, Can he separate from the

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Corruptions of the Church of *England*, without departing at the same Time from Communion in Worship with the Members of that corrupt Church? In like Manner, Can he give the Right-hand of Fellowship, by a Conjunction in Ecclesiastical Judicatories with Intruders, *Arminians*, or *Arians*, or even with such as refuse to display the Banner of a Testimony against such Corrupters and their Corruptions, and after all say, he is pure? Can one take a Viper in his Bosom, and receive no Hurt? *Can a Man take Fire in his Bosom, and his Clothes not be burnt? or, can one go upon hot Coals, and his Feet not be burnt?* Prov. vi. 27, 28.

His sixth Proposition is, *While we can maintain Communion with a Church without Sin, and while sinful Terms of Communion are not required of us, we are never to separate.* This Proposition consists of two distinct Propositions, and therefore I shall consider them distinctly. The first whereof is, *While we can maintain Communion with a Church without Sin, we are never to separate.* This is very true, as it is laid in general Terms; but still the Question is, If we can maintain Communion, without Sin, with the Judicatories of a Church, carrying on a Course of Defection in their Judicative Capacity? This is what the Author must maintain, if he speaks any Thing to the Purpose against the seceding Brethren; and, if this is the Meaning of his Proposition, he still begs what is in Question: But, for confirming his Proposition, he tells us, “ Mr. Rutherford, when speaking of the Popish Ceremonies of the Church of Old England, says, *We teach Separation from these Ceremonies to be lawful, but not from the Churches.*” Even so the seceding Brethren affirm, that *Secession from the present Judicatories is lawful, but not from the Church of Scotland.* He adds from Mr. Durham on Scandal *, “ When Men may unite without personal Guilt, or Accession to the Defects or Guilt of others, there may and ought to be Union, even tho’ there be Failings and Defects of several Kinds in a Church.” But the Question is, If we can have Union and Conjunction with the present Judicatories, as *Parts* and *Members* of the same Ecclesiastick Body with them, without *personal Guilt*, or Accession to their Guilt and Defects? We may be accessory to the Guilt of others, in no Cases than our Author seems to apprehend: As for Instance, If our Union with a backsliding Party strengthens the Hands of the

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* On Scand. Part. 4. Chap. 7. p. m. 324.

conjunct Ecclesiastick Body in their backsliding Course, we are thereby accessory to their Guilt; tho' we should abhor it with our Hearts, and testify against it with our Mouths, yet, we are saying, *A Confederacy*, to them to whom we ought not to say, *A Confederacy*. Again, If our Union with a backsliding Body obstructs our Discharge of these Duties which our Office does oblige us unto, we are not only accessory to their Guilt, but are thereby deeply involved in personal Guilt: Therefore the judicious *Durham*, in the place cited, tells us of some Things that may justly scar a tender Conscience from uniting; and, amongst others, "When some Engagement is required for the future, which doth restrain from any Duty called for, or that may afterward be called for." And it may be made evident in its proper Place, that Union and Conjunction with the present Judicatories, doth in its own Nature, tho' no express Engagement should be required, lay Ministers under a *restraining Bond*, inconsistent with their Duty in the present Situation of the Church of Scotland.

I proceed to the *other Branch* of his *sixth* Proposition, which is, *While sinful Terms of Communion are not required of us, we are never to separate*. I shall consider, together with this, his *11th* Proposition, on Account of their Affinity, "Tho' the greatest Part of a Church, Ministers and People, should make sad Defection, that will not be sufficient Ground of Separation from her, while no *sinful Terms of Communion are required of us*." Our Author in the Whole of his Reasonings pleads, that there should be no Separation where no *sinful Terms of Communion* are required; his Arguments against Secession do frequently turn upon this. Tho' I do not grant it, that the present Judicatories have not imposed *sinful Terms of Communion* upon Ministers and Church-members; yet I cannot admit of our Author's Proposition, and that because Church-communion is thereby stated upon *negative Terms*, whereas something *positive* is required unto warrantable Church-communion: Particularly, as I observed in the first Section, a *publick Profession* and *Confession* of the Truths of God, is one of the *peculiar Characteristicks* of the Church of the Living God; the Church unto which we may warrantably join ourselves, ought to *maintain and profess the true Doctrine, and the true Faith*, according to the Citation given us from Mr. Gillespie, *Essay* p. 3. and all our reformed Divines have always stated Church-communion

munion upon *positive* Terms, as may appear from the 18th Article of our first Confession. If the most Part of the Members of a Church should maintain and profess *Arminian* Errors, or *Arian* Blasphemies, and at the same Time do not require it of us, as a *Term* of *Communion* with them, to make the same Profession; must we therefore join in Communion with them? or, must we own ourselves Members of the same Ecclesiastick Body with them? Where is then our Confession of Christ, or of the Truths of Christ, before a perverse and wicked Generation? The Christians of old were very cautious of Communion with the Erroneous: When the *Arian* Heresy prevailed in the *fourth Century*, the *Orthodox* refused Church-communion with the *Arians*; the great *Atbanasius*, in the several Places where he preached, exhorted the Faithful to shun the Fellowship of the *Arians*, and to have Fellowship only with them who confessed the true Faith*. Yea, they would not sit in the same Council or Synod with the *Arians*: Hence *Paphnutius* the Confessor, when he observed *Maximus* a godly and orthodox Man (as *Ruffin* reports) thro' too much Simplicity sitting in the Synod of *Tyre*, composed of such as were of the *Arian* Side, the said *Paphnutius* went boldly into the Midst of the Synod, and said, *Te non patiar sedere*, &c. i. e. "O *Maximus*, I will not suffer thee to sit in a Synod of Malignants, nor to enter amongst the Workers of Iniquity;" and forthwith brought him out of the Synod †. But, according unto our Author's Principles, they should have both kept their Seats in that Synod, and contended against the *Arian* Faction, because no sinful Terms of Communion were imposed upon them. Doctor *Owen* observes in his *Enquiry into the Original*, &c. p. 179. that the "*Socinians*, under a Pretence of Forbearance, Love and mutual Toleration, do offer us the Communion of their Churches, wherein there is somewhat of Order and Discipline commendable; yet (*says he*) it is unlawful to join in Church-fellowship or Communion with them, on Account of their pernicious Errors," some of which he mentions. I had Occasion to notice in the *printed Missive*, that a considerable Body of the *Dissenters* in *Ireland* have rejected Confessions of Faith, as Tests of Orthodoxy, or Soundnets in the Faith; and, in their Room, the only Term of Church-communion which they require, is our Ac-

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* *Socrates* Hist. Ecclesiast. Lib. 2. Cap. 19. || *Ruf.* Hist. Ecclesiast. Lib. 1. Cap. 17.

knowledge of the Truth, in *express* Scripture-terms: This cannot be reckoned a sinful Term of Communion; and yet, in the mean Time, *Arians, Socinians, Arminians* and others, who wrest the Scriptures to their own Destruction, will not refuse to make a Confession of their Faith in *express* Scripture-terms; but their Sense and Meaning of Scripture-words, is quite opposite to the Scope and Design of the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures: And therefore, I humbly judge, our worthy Brethren in *Ireland* have Scripture and Reason on their Side, to support them in their Conduct and Practice, when they have declared a *Secession* from such who have laid aside Confessions of Faith, and in their associating together in distinct Presbyteries from them. I hope the Author of the *Essay* will not dispute with me the Lawfulness and Necessity of Confessions of Faith, as Tests of Soundness in the Faith, in the present Situation of the Church: And, if they are warrantable and necessary, it is not sufficient to justify our continuing in Communion with any Church whatsoever, that she requires not expressly any sinful Terms of Communion, unless there is likewise a joint Profession and Acknowledgment of the Truth as it is in Christ Jesus, in Opposition to the Errors of the Time, and to erroneous Seducers: Therefore, for the above Reasons, I must refuse and reject our Author's above Principle, upon which he lays so much Stress and Weight, and which he frequently repeats in his *Essay*, as lax and dangerous, and as having a Tendency to make the Church of the living God a Receptacle of the grossest Errors, providing it is not required as a Term of Communion that such Errors be received and embraced by Church-members. And, from what is above observed, the Reader may easily perceive the Ambiguity and Deceit of our Author's common Topicks that run through his whole *Essay*, *That Separation from a true Church, or where the Essentials of a true Church are continued, is sinful*; and that *it is unlawful to separate from a Church which requires no sinful Terms of Communion*. As for the first Part of the last above-mentioned Proposition, "Tho' the greatest Part of a Church, Ministers and People, should make sad Defection, that will not be sufficient Ground of Separation from her." For Confirmation of this Proposition, he gives us the Case of the Church of *Sardis*: And this leads me to observe, that there is an Ambiguity in the Word *Defection*, as our Author makes use of it in his Proposition. If by

Defection he means Degeneracy in a Church from the inward Principle of Grace, or falling away from these Measures and Degrees of the Exercise of Grace once attained unto by Church-members, and that in the Room thereof a dead, lifeless and formal Profession prevails; I shall readily grant that this cannot in itself be judged a sufficient Ground of Secession from any Church whatsoever, and that because, where a visible Profession of the Truth is kept up, the Deadness or want of Liveliness in that Profession, falls only under the Cognisance of the *faithful and true Witness*. And this was the Case of the Church of *Sardis*: She kept up her Profession of the Truth, therefore it is said she *had a Name to live*; but in the mean Time the faithful and true Witness, who only best knew her State, finds her *to be dead*, or, as our Author expresses it, formal and hypocritical, having fallen from her former Liveliness, Zeal and Tendernefs. But if by *Defection*, in the Proposition, is meant Degeneracy in a Church, or the Defection of most Part of Ministers and Church-members from the Doctrine, Government and Discipline of the Lord's House, as it has been once received, professed and practised amongst them, this is not the Sin charged upon the Church of *Sardis*: She retained still her outward visible Profession, as has been said; and upon this Account she had so a great Name amongst the other Churches, that they reckoned her a living Church. And it is concerning Defections of the latter Kind that the Question at present is.

I shall leave our Author's *Propositions*, as they are laid in his *second* Chapter, when I have observed, that, in the Illustration of his *eighth* Proposition, he tells us, That the Reverend Mr. *Forester* cites Mr. *Durham* on Scandal, acknowledging, that, *when Scandals become excessive, we may depart to another Congregation* *. And may not I, for the very same Reason, affirm, that when Scandals become excessive in a National Church, and when the Judicatories refuse to purge themselves or the Church from these Scandals, it is lawful and necessary to depart from Communion with them, lest, by continuing with the same Lump, we also be *leavened* thereby? Since our Author has mentioned the Reverend Mr. *Forester*, I cannot but notice, that, if he had seriously considered the excellent Reasonings of that learned Man, and his strong Pleadings (in that Part of his Book which he cites) for Separation from a corrupt Church, I do not think he would have put Pen

to Paper on the Head of Separation: The most Part of his Arguments are laid directly against our Author's Principles; and if, in many Places of his Book, we shall, for *Conformists*, read *present Judicatories*, he proves all that the seceding Brethren plead for. And, in the Page out of which our Author takes his Citation, Mr. *Forester* tells us of several Cases, in which Separation is not *Schism*; as first, "If it be from those, tho' never so many, who are drawing back, and in so far as drawing back from what-ever Piece of Duty and Integrity is attained; for this is still to be held fast, according to many Scripture-commands." And this is what the seceding Ministers plead for. The same Author has much more to excellent Purpose upon this Head, which the Reader, if he pleases, may consult at Leisure.

The Author of the *Essay* proceeds, in his *third* Chapter, to give Instances of some Things which are just Ground for Mourning and Lamentation, yet are not sufficient Causes of Separation. His *first* Instance is, *Essay*, p. 17. "Albeit there be Errors, and Errors of a hainous Nature, among some in a Church, this is not sufficient Ground of Separation from that Church, nay, not tho' these Errors should remain uncensured." This Proposition, as it is laid by our Author without any Limitation or Restriction, appears to me to be very lax and dangerous; in regard it is one of the special Ends and Designs of God's rearing up and erecting a visible Church for himself in the World, that he may be honoured and glorified by a publick and open Profession and Acknowledgment of the Truth: Therefore, if any particular visible Church shall tolerate in her Bowels Errors of a hainous Nature, she does not answer the End and Design of infinite Wisdom, Love and Grace in her Erection and Constitution; if Errors of a hainous Nature pass uncensured, the *House of the living God* becomes thereby a *Den* of notorious Thieves and Robbers, and the Church may be a Society made up of *Infidels* who deny the Resurrection of the Dead, or of *Arians*, *Socinians*, and the very worst Hereticks. I doubt not but in the purest Churches Error may spring up, as also the Office-bearers may need to be excited and stirred up to their Duty; this is the Case with respect to the Instance that he gives us from the Church of *Corinth*: The Apostle, in his first Epistle, stirs up the Office-bearers of that Church to the Exercise of Discipline against the *infectious* Person; he chargeth likewise some in that Church

with denying the *Resurrection* of the Dead: But then it deserves our Consideration, that from his *second Epistle* it is evident, that the *Presbytery* of *Corinth* had obeyed the *Apostolical Admonition*, and had repented of their Negligence; they censured the incestuous Person, and the Censure had its desired Effect; consequently this Church was, in her Ecclesiastick Capacity, a *reforming* Church, 2 Cor. ii. 6, 7. Chap. vii. 8, 9. I likewise conclude, that the Office-bearers of the Church of *Corinth* had discharged their Duty, either in reclaiming such who denied the Resurrection of the Dead, or by a suitable Testimony against such obstinate Hereticks; and that because of their *sorrowing after a godly Manner*, in the Place cited; as also, because in his *second Epistle* he does not give the least Hint, that this *capital Heresy* which he had condemned, and charged some of them with, was *remaining* amongst them: And if the Author of the *Essay* or any others will affirm that the *Heresy* remained *uncensured* in *Corinth*, they accuse, not the *Apostle Paul* only, but a *greater*, even our Lord Jesus Christ himself, who, by his Spirit speaking in the *Apostle*, gives not the least Reproof or Admonition on that Head in the *second Epistle*, when they are supposed to slight the Warning that was given them in the *first*. From what is observed it is evident, that our Author's Instance of the Church of *Corinth* does not prove his Proposition. Our Author thinks fit sometimes to cite Doctor *Owen*: I hope he cannot justly refuse me the same Liberty; and therefore I shall subjoin the *Doctor's* Answer to the Objection against Separation from a corrupt Church, from the Case of the Church of *Corinth*, in his Piece on *Schism*, p. 265. He grants, that many Abuses may enter into the best Churches, and that Secession is not to be immediately stated without Attempts for Remedy unto such Disorders; and this the seceding Ministers likewise yield:

“ But (says the Doctor) had the Church of *Corinth* continued in the Condition before-described, that notorious scandalous Sins had went unpunished, unreproved, Drunkenness continued and practised in the Assemblies, Men abiding by the Denial of the Resurrection, so overturning the whole Gospel, and the Church refusing to do her Duty, and exercise her Authority, to cast all these disorderly Persons, upon their Obstinacy, out of her Communion; it had been the Duty of every Saint of God in that Church to have *withdrawn* from it, to come out from among them, and not to have been Partaker

taker of their Sins, unless they were willing to partake of their Plague also, which upon such an Apostasy would certainly ensue." Tho' the Chapter above-mentioned gives Occasion for Abundance of Remarks, yet I shall not trouble the Reader with them; only it deserves to be noticed, that, in all the Instances he gives us of Grounds of Mourning and Lamentation, we have *none* from the *Conduct* of the *present Judicatories* of the Church of *Scotland*: He gives his Opinion, that the Act of Assembly 1732 was a bad Act, p. 21. but he nowhere reckons it a *Cause of Mourning*, even tho' this Act, albeit it is repealed, is to this very Day justified practically, by the Procedure of Judicatories in this Settlement of Ministers; and likewise he makes some faint Acknowledgment, that there may be much Ground at this Day to lament over a dead Ministry in many Places, p. 24. but he gives Vent to his Invectives against our reforming Period, particularly against the Assembly 1638, as p. 20, 21.

The Author of the *Essay* goes on, in his *fourth* Chapter, to instance several Things reckoned just and sufficient Causes for Separation from a Church. The *first* is, "When a Church turns heretical in her Doctrine, maintaining such Doctrines in her Standards as are everfive of the Foundation, utterly inconsistent with Salvation; or denies such Truths, without the Knowledge and Faith whereof we cannot have Life and endless Happiness." He gives an Instance in three fundamental Truths; I hope he does not pretend to give us a List of such Truths as are fundamental. I have already observed, that the Question about Foundation-truths is a very important one: All Divine Truths are so closely linked together, that it is not easy to determine the Question about Doctrines everfive of the Foundation. I may transcribe, to this Purpose, some emphatick Words of the *Author* of the *Fulfilling of the Scriptures*, Append. p. 511, 512. "Truths, comparatively small, may be great in their Season, when they are the Word of His Patience; yea, we may say, the lesser it seems, and of mean Value with many, it makes the Christian's Adherence thereto a greater Testimony. It is clear what a close Concate-nation there is amongst the Truths of God held forth in the Scripture, that one Part thereof cannot be reached without a special Prejudice to the Whole; yea, it may be said, every Corruption of the Truth hath an Aim at the very Soul of Religion, by a direct Tendency thereto."

“ thereto.” But whereas our Author affirms in his above Proposition, that there is Ground of Separation from a Church, when she maintains such Doctrines in her Standards as are everfive of the Foundation; There is a *Question* that comes upon the Field in the present Dispute, and that is, When the publick Standards of a Church are sound, yet *Errors* striking at the Foundation, and everfive of that Scheme of Doctrine contained in her *Confession of Faith*, are brought to the Bar of her *Judicatories*, but they refuse to condemn them as contrary to her Standards, and give no suitable *Testimony* against them; Whether or not, in this Case, that Church is holding the Foundation? And, I-am afraid, this will be found to be the State of Matters with the *Judicatories* of this Church; and, if this is the Case, there is as much Ground for *Secession* from them, as if Doctrines everfive of the Foundation were maintained in her Standards. A Confession of Faith is of no more Use as a Test of Soundness in the Faith in any Church, yea, it is stript of its principal Use and Design, if Errors are vented and maintained everfive of the Scripture-doctrines contained therein, and if the *Judicatories* of a Church refuse to declare so much.

But tho’ the Author of the *Essay* lays down the above Proposition, That there is Ground of Separation from a Church, when she maintains such Doctrines in her Standards as are everfive of the Foundation; yet we are at a Loss to know what his real Sentiments upon this Head are. As the Title of his Chapter runs, he may be constructed to be taking upon him the Part of an *Historian*, reporting several Things which are *reckoned* just and sufficient Causes for Separation. They are *reckoned*, says he; But, by whom? He does not say expressly that *he himself* reckons them; and accordingly I find him once and again limiting and restricting the above Proposition, as p. 16. “ When
 “ Defection from the Truth is made in Fundamentals, and
 “ the Church’s Standards of Doctrine are corrupted, and
 “ we required to approve thereof.” And, p. 113. speaking of this National Church, he says, “ If it was true that her
 “ declared or professed Doctrine is corrupt in fundamen-
 “ tal Points, and we required to approve thereof, I should
 “ think it sufficient Ground of Separation.” From the above Instances, this Author appears to me to be so *ambiguous*, that it is a Difficulty where to fix him. Yet from the Passages I have cited it appears very plain, that, in order to state a *Secession* from a Church on Account of her

her Errors in Doctrine, *Three* Things must concur; 1st, The Errors must be of such a Nature as are utterly inconsistent with Salvation. 2^{dly}, They must be maintained by a Church in her Standards; yea, tho' such gross Errors should be maintained in her Standards, yet we must not state a Secession from her, unless, in the *third* Place, she require us to approve thereof. At this Rate, Conjunction ought to be maintained, tho' she should make a *publick* and open *Profession* of *Errors* utterly inconsistent with Salvation, if she does not require it of her several Members that they *approve* thereof. If this is not to establish a profane *Syncretism* or Coalition with the Adversaries of Truth, condemned by the primitive Church, and by all reformed Divines, let the unprejudiced World judge. According to our Author's Principles, he cannot state a Secession from the Church of *Rome* on Account of her doctrinal Errors, if she is pleased to give him such an Indulgence as not to require him to approve of the same; and the last Age did afford Instances of the Popish Party, their being willing to compromise Matters with the Reformed after such a Manner *: Yea, according to our Author's Principles, there was no Ground of Secession from *Rome* on Account of her gross doctrinal Errors before the Council of *Trent*, or at least before the third *Lateran Council*, that condemned the Doctrine of the *Albigenses*, who then witnessed for the Truth in a Way of Secession from the Church of *Rome*.

The *second* Instance, which he says is reckoned sufficient Ground of Separation from a Church, is *Idolatry* in Worship. In his Illustration of this, he tells us, p. 27. " I am of their Opinion, who think we are to separate from all false and corrupt Worship in any Church, tho' every Corruption in Worship is not sufficient Ground of Separation." Tho' he thinks fit to deliver his own Opinion in this Place, yet I am at a Loss to understand how both Parts of his above Assertion can hang together. He tells us, We are to separate from all false and corrupt Worship; and yet he says, Every Corruption in Worship is not Ground of Separation. I wish he had told us what is that Corruption in Worship that falls not under the Universal, *All false and corrupt Worship*; or that he had told us what Corruption there is in the Worship of God, which he judges is not a sufficient Ground of Separation: For my Part, I humbly think it may be made evident, that,

* *Turret. de Necess. Seceff. Disput. 5ta. Sect. 34.*

that, wherever there is any Corruption in the Worship of God, it is a sufficient Ground of Separation from Communion with the Worshipers in their Worship, in case they refuse to reform.

The *third* Instance he gives of what is reckoned Ground of Secession, is laid in the following Manner; " Tyranny " in the Government of a Church is reckoned just Ground " of Separation by some." I am sorry that I have Occasion so often to notice the *ambiguous* Manner in which this Author delivers himself upon such a weighty and important Subject. He says, *Tyranny, &c.* is reckoned by *some*; But, by whom? He should have told us plainly, whether or not *he himself* reckons it a just Ground of Separation from a Church: This Way of treating such a grave Subject, has a native Tendency to amuse or intangle his unthinking and unlearned Reader. When he tells us, Tyranny is reckoned by *some* a just Ground of Separation; perhaps it is only by some *two* or *three* Divines, who have not duly considered the Subject: And yet Mr. *Shiells*, on *Church-communion*, mentions *Tyranny* of Government as one of the *general* Grounds of Separation, commonly *allowed by all* †. It is true, our Author gives us an Instance of one considerable Divine, *viz. Turretine*, who mentions Tyranny in Government as a Ground of Separation: He has not directed us to the Place, neither in this nor in the former Page where he cites *Turretine*; but the Reader will find the Passages he cites, in his Dispute upon the *Necessity* of *Secession* from the Church of *Rome* ||. Our Author observes, That, according to *Turretine*, " it is not every " Disorder in the Government of a Church which is " Ground of Separation, but most cruel Tyranny, and " intolerable Persecution both of Soul and Body." But, as that learned Divine in the Place cited states the Question concerning Secession from the Church of *Rome*, he sets his Argument in as strong Light as Matter of Fact could support the same; for it is Truth, that the Church of *Rome* was guilty of cruel Tyranny, and intolerable Persecution. But, to speak plain upon this Head, our reformed Divines allow Tyranny in Government to be a Ground of Secession from a Church, tho' she has not arrived at the Height of *Roman Cruelty* and Persecution; therefore Mr. *Shiells* in the Place cited, when he mentions Tyranny of Government, which he says is commonly allowed by all to be one

† On *Church-communion*, p. 18.

|| *Disput. de Necess. Seceff.* Quest. I. Sect. 12.

of the Grounds of Separation, he explains it of *Tyranny*, "encroaching upon the Right of Administration, and the Exercise of it *then and there*." But, that the Question upon the Head of Tyranny may be more clearly stated, I must observe, That a Church may be said to be tyrannical in her Government, either when the *Form* and Model of her Government is tyrannical, or when she is tyrannical in the *Administration* of her Government. Our Presbyterian Divines do generally affirm, that *Diocesan Episcopacy* is a tyrannical Form and Model of Government: And tho' Prelacy was not so tyrannical in its Form and Model before the Year 1638, as when it was re-introduced into this Church in the Year 1662, as I shall afterwards shew; yet a Secession was stated by faithful and eminent Ministers, even from that Form and Model of Prelacy that obtained before the Year 1638. And it is what cannot be refused, that the Bulk and Body of Presbyterians in *Scotland* did state a Secession upon that Form and Model of Prelatick Government that was established in the Year 1662; and their refusing Communion with the Prelatick Church of *Scotland*, was made a Handle of for that violent Persecution that was raised against them. But, according to our Author's Way of stating the Case anent Tyranny in Government, unless there is *most cruel* and habitual Tyranny, with *intolerable* Persecution of Soul or Body, there is *no* Ground of Secession from a Church on the Head of Tyranny; yea further, according to our Author's Way of reasoning, it appears to me, that there was no Ground of Secession from the Prelatick Church of *Scotland* purely upon her Form and Model of Government; at least, that Church-members might have entertained Communion in Worship with that Church: Especially when it is considered, that, during the late Times of Prelacy, the Ceremonies of the Church of *England* had no Place in her Worship.

Again, a Church may be said to be tyrannical in her Government, when the *Administration* of her Government is tyrannical: As for Instance, Tho' Presbyterian Church-government, as to its Form and Model, is *Divine*; yet if, under the Shadow of the said Government, a *lordly* and *magisterial Power* is exercised over the Heritage of God, if the Flock of Christ are ruled with Rigour, if the Keys of Government and Discipline are perverted; in these Cases the *Administration* is *tyrannical*, and the Government is not a Whit better than if its Form and Model were

Prelatical. We use to say, *Corruptio optimi pessima.* This tyrannical Administration of the Government lays a just Foundation for Secession from Church-judicatories, who are walking quite contrary to the End and Design of their Erection and Constitution in the Church, and who thereby forfeit their Claim to the Exercise of the Keys of Government and Discipline in the House of God: And that this is the State of Matters in the present Judicatories, may be made evident afterwards. I shall only add further, for clearing this Head, That it is not *Sessions, Presbyteries, Synods and General Assemblies*, that make us truly a *Presbyterian Church*, but the *free Access* of *Church-members* with their *Grievances* unto these Courts; and the *Exercise* of *Ministerial Power* and Authority in them, for the *Edification* of the Body of Christ, for the Redress of their *Grievances*, for the *Removal* of Offences whereby the Flock of Christ may be hurt or stumbled, for *preserving* the Institutions of Christ in their Purity, for *maintaining* that Liberty wherewith Christ hath made his People free, and for *purging* the Church of such Errors or erroneous Persons whereby the whole Body is in Danger to be leavened. If Power and Authority is not exercised in the said Judicatories, for these and the like valuable Ends, to the Honour and Glory of the Head of the Church; or if it is exercised by the Judicatories of a Church unto quite contrary Ends and Purposes; What remains but a *Prelatick Government*, under a *Presbyterian Name* and Shadow?

The *fourth* Instance given in the *Essay* is concerning the *Intrusion* of Ministers, p. 29. "Some, says he, make the Intrusion of Ministers upon Christian Congregations a Ground of Separation." He owns, that the Charge of violent Intrusions "is a Charge from which the Church of Scotland can least be vindicated of any Thing laid to her Charge since the Revolution, considering how many Settlements have been made when Congregations were reclaiming since the Act restoring Patronages Anno 1712." p. 30. What he adds concerning the *Stop* that has been put to such violent Settlements, I shall afterwards consider. But he further adds, "Whatever Ground there is for Lamentation, there is no sufficient Ground for Separation from the Church of Scotland notwithstanding of such Intrusions, whatever some particular Congregations may have to say for vindicating their Practice in not attending upon the Ministry of such

“such as are violently thrust in upon them.” Here again our Author perverts the true State of the Question, in regard the present Judicatories of this National Church must be considered as carrying on, authorising and supporting violent Settlements, notwithstanding of manifold Remonstrances against their Conduct and Practice, both by Ministers and other Church-members: And consequently the Question is, Whether or not this, with other Acts of Tyranny in the Administration that may be afterwards named, justly infer that the present Judicatories are so tyrannical in their Government, that our Secession from them is necessary and warrantable? Our Author endeavours to impress his Readers with his great Zeal against violent Intrusions; yet he thinks fit to make an *Apology* for his Brethren that are active in carrying on violent Settlements, when he tells us, p. 32. “Tho’ I am not
 “to vindicate them, yet sundry of our Brethren who have
 “gone Lengths in appearing for Candidates having Pre-
 “sentations, which others cannot but condemn, have
 “declared, Was it not for the Strait the Church is in from
 “the Grievance of Patronage, which they profess is a
 “Grievance to them as well as others, they had been as
 “averse from countenancing such Settlements as any.” It is a very mean *Apology* for them, to tell the World that the *Grievance of Patronage* (that is, the *Civil Law* establishing Patronages) has led them to *counteract the Laws* of the only Lord and Lawgiver of Zion. If our Author had dealt faithfully with his Brethren, and according to the great Zeal that he professes, he ought plainly to have told them that they should rather *suffer than sin*: But, that he may still extenuate their Sin, he likewise adds, “They
 “affirm, the gravaminous Law of Patronages constrained
 “our Church-judicatories, even in the best and purest
 “Times of Reformation, to the like Measures.” Our Author must needs have a good deal of Assurance, when he reports, without a just Remark upon it, that his intruding Brethren affirm, that the Judicatories of this Church in her reforming Times pursued the *like Measures* with the present Judicatories in the Settlement of Ministers. This is a most injurious Reflection upon them. Can his Brethren give one single Instance of their pursuing the like Measures with the Assembly 1737, in their Act and Sentence anent the Settlement of the Parish of *Denny*? besides many other particular Instances that might be given. Or, can our Author or his Brethren give any Instance of ag-

grieved and oppressed Congregations coming before our General Assemblies in our reforming Times, with a loud Cry of Oppression on the account of the violent Settlement of Ministers amongst them? But, how many Instances have we had of this kind before our National Assemblies within these twenty Years bypast? Yet he tells us, *They affirm*, that our Church-judicatories in our purest Times of Reformation took the *like Measures* with the present; and, if it is not Truth which *they affirm*, what End can our Author propose to himself by reporting it in his Essay without a just Remark upon it, unless it is that he may *extenuate* their Sin?

Upon this Head of the Intrusion of Ministers, the *Essay* observes, p. 29. "That sundry of the Dissenters from the Church of *England* have judged the Want of a free Choice in the Election of their own Pastors, is enough to vindicate them in separating from the Communion of that Church." But it seems he has not found a *Scots Presbyterian* Divine that makes the Intrusion of Ministers a Ground of Separation. Since our Author thinks fit to deal so much in Authorities, I shall give him two Testimonies, upon this Head, from an Author whom he justly commends, *viz.* Mr. *Skiells* on *Church-communion*, who, p. 18. mentions "four general Grounds of Separation commonly allowed by all, *Heresy in Doctrine, Idolatry* or Breach of the Second Command in the Matter and Manner of Worship, *Intrusion* or Tyranny of Government, and *Schism* or a divided Government." This worthy Author is pleading for Communion with the Ministry about the Time of the *Revolution*, and he applies the four general Grounds in the following Manner; Speaking of the Ministers at that Time, he says, "For as none can doubt their Right to administrate all Ordinances, so there is none of these Ordinances perverted by them either in Matter or Manner, since they are not erroneous in Doctrine, nor do break the Second Commandment in Worship, nor *Intruders* or *Tyrannical*, nor schismatical in Discipline or Government." I heartily wish that we could say as much concerning the present Ministry and Judicatories of this Church. From the above Words it is plain, that *Intruders*, and *Tyrannical*, are one and the same with Mr. *Skiells*; as also, that *Intrusion*, or *Tyranny* in *Government*, when it prevails in a Church, is a *Ground of Separation* commonly allowed by all. Likewise, the *Intrusion* of Ministers was one of the Grounds upon which a

Secession was stated from the *Prelatick Church of Scotland* by the *Body of Presbyterians*, as the same Author shews at Length, *Hind-let-loose*, p. 236, 237, &c. to which I refer the Reader. When the Author of the *Essay*, in the Words cited above, seems to allow that particular Congregations have something to say for refusing to submit to the Ministry of such as are intruded upon them, I humbly judge Ministers may have as much to say, who refuse Communion with such Judicatories as obtrude Ministers upon Christian Congregations; there is as much Reason on the one Side, as the other: Yea, there may be more Reason for refusing Communion with the Judicatories, if there is any Weight in what our Author very well knows. Intruders have sometimes pled in their own Defence, that they must submit to the Authority, and obey the Sentences of Judicatories; and, if the Judicatories did not intrude Ministers upon Congregations, Intrusions could not take Place by any other Means whatsoever.

His next Instance of a Ground of Separation is, When Ministers are *scandalous* in Life and Conversation. And here I have no Difference with him: For he not only tells us what *some affirm*, and what *some think*; but declares plainly, that he is much of their Opinion, who think, "such as are evidently scandalous may be withdrawn from; albeith, through the Iniquity of the Times, they should not be censured by a Church-judicatory when complained of."

The last Instance he gives, of what is reckoned Ground of Separation, is, "The imposing the least sinful Term of Communion upon us." Here again he delivers himself plainly; for he owns, that this is Ground of Separation from a Church. He adds, "Some have been of Opinion, that this is the only Ground that can justify Separation from a Church of Christ." And here, at the Foot of the Page, he cites *Claud's Defence of the Reformation*, but he cites no Place of that Book: And, if he pleases to consult it, he will find other Grounds of Separation advanced; as for Instance, *Claud* affirms, "That when Corruption spreads over all the Body (*viz.* of the Ministry) in such a Manner, and to that Degree, that the Safety of the Faithful cannot longer subsist under the Conduct of these Persons, and that there is no Hope among them of any Amendment, then the only Remedy that remains is to separate from them; and it would be so far from either violating the Order of God, or

" oppo-

"opposing the Ministry that he had set up, that it would
 "be on the contrary to deliver it, as much as in us lay,
 "out of the Hands of those who have invaded it, and to
 "draw it out of that Oppression to which they have re-
 "duced it: This Separation therefore only regards those
 "Persons who were unlawfully called to the Ministry,
 "and who abused it against God and his Church *." And
 here, by the by, our Author may observe a famous re-
 formed Divine acknowledging the Justice of Separation
 from those who are *unlawfully called* to the Ministry:
 And I leave it to himself to judge, if *Intruders* are *law-*
fully called to the Ministry; as also, whether or not the
 Ministerial Power is abused against God and his Church,
 when Men are intruded upon dissenting and reclaiming
 Congregations, who are willing to have a Gospel-minister
 settled amongst them. He cites also, at the Foot of his
 Page, Bishop *Burnet's* History of his own Time: But he
 might have been ashamed to have mentioned one who is
 known to be abundantly lax in his Principles about Church-
 communion; and especially, when, in the Place to which
 our Author directs us, the Bishop is reasoning against Se-
 paration from the Church of *England*. Our Author pro-
 ceeds, p. 37. to give some particular Instances of sinful
 Terms of Communion: He names *seven*, wherein I agree
 with him; only I crave Leave to express his *Seventh* in
 the following Manner, namely, *If our Communion or Con-*
junction with any particular Church binds us up or restrains
us from the Discharge of any Duty which our Station, Office
and Character, by the Command of God, does oblige us unto,
whether the Restraint that is laid upon us be explicite or more
implicite. This I have illustrate already; and I hope our
 Author cannot reasonably refuse that it makes Conjunction
 with any particular Church equally sinful with these In-
 stances that are given by himself of sinful Terms of Com-
 munion. I proceed now to

SECT.

• *Hist. Def. Part 3. p. 17, 18. Engl. Transl.*

S E C T. III.

Wherein the State of the Question concerning Seceſſion from the preſent Judicatories is declared.

TH E Author of the Eſſay diverts himſelf a little with his *Criticisms* upon the Term *Seceſſion*, p. 193. when he tells us, The ordinary and common Senſe thereof is “ a *local Removing*, upon ſome urgent lawful Occaſion, Spiritual or Temporal, to another or better-constitute Church.” Tho’ the worthy Divine whom he cites tells us, That the Word *Seceſſion* may be taken in this Senſe ; yet he cannot but know, that our Divines have made uſe of this Term to expreſs a *Departure* from Communion with a particular viſible Church, either in Whole or in Part, upon juſt and weighty Grounds, even when there is *no local Removing*, or Changing of one’s Habitation : Hence *Turretine*, in his *Differtation* concerning the Neceſſity of Separation from the Church of *Rome*, makes ſtill uſe of the Term *Seceſſion*, tho’ he knew very well that the Proteſtants in *France* and *Germany*, and other Popiſh Countries, never removed from their Habitations, except when *Force* and *Violence* drove them from them. Our Author adds, “ They (the ſeceding Miniſters) have not ſeparated locally, ſeeing they ſtill inhabit the ſame Manſes, “ as well as enjoy the ſame Benefices.” It ſeems the above Obſerve upon the Term *Seceſſion* is made, that he may vent ſomewhat of a Grudge that we have a peaceable Reſidence in our ſeveral Congregations to which we bear a paſtoral Relation, and that we enjoy the Benefices to which we have a juſt Claim by virtue of our Office and Relation to them. Next, he tells us, The Word *Seceſſion* is ſometimes taken for a *Revolt* and *Mutiny*. He does not alledge any Authority for this Senſe and Meaning of the Word, and I do not know if he can ; but he is pleaſed to add, “ *Many think they have made a Seceſſion in that Reſpect.*” Here he diſcovers a Diſpoſition to hold and treat us as *Revolters* and *Mutineers* ; but I ſhall not trouble the Reader further with his idle *Criticisms* in handling ſuch an important Subject. Only I cannot but here obſerve, that it may be reaſonably preſumed that our Author has learned the above Criticiſm from ſome *Doctor* of the Church of *Rome*, or at leaſt from ſome Author whoſe Name for
Shame

Shame he behoved to conceal ; and what makes this Conjecture more probable is, that Mr. *Claud* reports, that the Doctors of the Church of *Rome* treated our worthy Reformers after the same Manner : His Words are, “ They “ accuse them (*viz.* our Reformers) to have been Rebels “ and Schismatics, who lifted themselves up against the “ Authority of their Mother the Church, and broke the “ sacred Bond of the Christian Communion*.” Which is the same upon the Matter with what our Author has advanced as above. But, whatever be in this, sure it was some urgent Necessity that brought him upon the Field, without a *visible Second*, if not *two* to support him, seeing he seldom takes the Field without two or three such *Attendants*, tho’ frequently *pressed* into his Service. But I proceed to lay down some necessary *Observes* and *Distinctions*, for laying open the true State of the Question.

1st, There is a Difference betwixt *different Sentiments* amongst the Members of a Church, upon some particular Points that have never been a Part or Branch of Testimony in that Church, or that were never adopted in any of her publick Acts and Constitutions; and such *Principles and Practices* maintained and justified, which are in themselves a *Departure* or Backsliding from some Part or Branch of what has been received and adopted as a Point of Confession and Testimony in a Church. The *seceding Brethren* are far from stating their Secession upon *every Difference* of Sentiments. He tells us upon his first Proposition, “ That some would, and do, excommunicate all “ that are not exactly of their Mind.” Who these *some* are, our Author best knows. The Instance that he gives of the Giant *Procrustes*, p. 6. has more Levity in it than becomes the Gravity of the Subject. But as the above is none of the Principles of the seceding Ministers (for they know very well that the best of Men may have different Sentiments) so the Question before us is concerning *such Principles or Practices* as may be justly reckoned a *Departure* from what has been Matter of Confession and Testimony in this particular National Church.

2^{dly}, There is a vast Difference betwixt *Evils* and *Errors* that a Church may *fall into*, and these *Evils justified*, and continued in, after the ordinary Means have been used to reclaim a Church or the Judicatories thereof. The seceding Ministers have not stated their Secession upon any particular *Evils lately* sprung up in this National Church

* *Claud's Hist. Def. Part 1. p. 2.*

Church, and which the Judicatories shew a Willingness to reform, or bear Testimony against, in their judicative Capacity; but upon such Evils as have been *often complained of*, and remonstrate against; yea, and after all the ordinary Means have been used to bring the Judicatories to the faithful Discharge of their Duty, till at length some Ministers were thrust out from the present Judicatories, merely on account of their contending in a Way of Communion against the foresaid Evils, as is more fully shown in the *Introduction*.

3dly, It is one Thing to depart from the *Communion of a Church*, and another Thing to depart from *Communion with a Party* in that Church, tho' the greatest Number, who are carrying on a Course of Defection and Backsliding. The *seceding Brethren* have always refused, and they do upon good Grounds refuse, that they have made any *Secession from the Church of Scotland*. If the Church of Scotland is considered as her Principles are held forth from the Word of God, in her *Confession of Faith, Larger and Shorter Catechisms, Form of Church-government, Directory for Worship*, and other laudable Acts and Constitutions of this National Church; the seceding Ministers have openly declared and acknowledged their *Adherence* to all these, in their *Judicial Act and Testimony*: Or, if her Principles are considered, as they are solemnly avouched and sworn to the National Covenant of Scotland, and the Solemn League and Covenant of the three Nations, they have also in like Manner, in their foresaid Act and Testimony, acknowledged the *inviolable Obligation* of these solemn Oaths and Covenants: But, if the Church of Scotland is considered as *represented* in her *present Judicatories*, they own that they have declared a Secession from them, and that they cannot now act in Conjunction with them, as Members of the same Ecclesiastical Body; and that because they are carrying on a Course of Defection and Backsliding from our covenanted Uniformity in Doctrine, Worship, Government and Discipline, notwithstanding of manifold Representations and Remonstrances made before them unto the contrary. Therefore the Question under our Consideration is not concerning *Secession from the Church of Scotland*, but concerning *Secession from the present Judicatories* of this National Church.

4thly, There is a vast Difference betwixt a Church *pursuing* after Reformation, and a Church *declining and backsliding* from her Reformation-purity. In the former Case,

when a Church is using her Endeavours to reform what is wrong, and to redress what is gravaminous, tho' through Mistake she may take some wrong Steps in her Administration, yet it would be very unreasonable to depart from her Communion; but in the *latter* Case, when the prevailing Course and Management of the Judicatories of a Church is towards *Backsliding* from Reformation-purity once attained unto, every wrong Step that is taken has a native Tendency towards strengthening and accelerating the general Course of Apostasy and Backsliding. Tho' the Essay looks upon this Distinction as of no Weight, yet I find Mr. *Skiells*, in his *Treatise on Church-communion*, lays very much Stress upon it: Therefore, p. 23, 24. of that Book, he lays down the very same Distinction; and when he comes to state the Question, p. 27. he states it in the following Manner, according to his Views of the Church of *Scotland* at that Time; "The Question (says he) is not, Whether we can hold Union or Communion with those Ministers, tho' sound in Principles, who yet are carrying on Courses of Compliances and Defections, involving all in Sin that have Communion with them, in a broken and declining State of the Church? but the Question is, Whether we can have Communion and Union with these that did indeed comply with the wicked Establishments of the Time, and were involved in the Defections of the Church, but *now* are carrying on Reformation in Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government, according to the Institutions of Christ, and the Constitutions of this Church in former Times?" The same excellent Person is yet more plain, when he tells us, p. 15. Only we plead for Union with Presbyterian Ministers promoting Reformation in Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government, and opposing Popery; Prelacy, Erastianism, Sectarianism, and whatsoever is contrary to sound Doctrine and the Power of Godliness, according to the Word of God, our *Confession of Faith*, and Covenants." I humbly judge, the seceding Ministers may be satisfied to have their Cause examined and tried according to the above Way and Manner in which Mr. *Skiells* states the Question. Our Author thinks fit to tell us, p. 196. That he knows the above Treatise was recommended by our dear Brother the Reverend Mr. *Ebenezer Erskine* to some of his Parishoners when at *Portmoak*; and (says he) I wish all our Separatists and others also may read

“ it seriously, hearkning to his solid Reasons against Separation.” Whether our Author speaks of the Reverend Mr. *Erskine* in the above Manner, in a Way of Jest, or out of true Regard unto him, I shall leave it to the Reader to judge ; only I must observe, that he had good Reason to recommend Mr. *Shiells* on Church-communion, and I wish our Author and others would seriously consider his solid Reasons and Conclusions against Union and Conjunction with such as are carrying on a Course of Defection from our reformed and covenanted Principles.

5thly, It is one Thing to state a Secession from a Church on account of *personal Blemishes* and Defects in the Walk and Conversation of her Members, and another Thing to state Secession from a Church on account of a *Course* of *Defection* from Steps of Reformation once attained unto, carried on by her Judicatories in their judicative Capacity, notwithstanding of Remonstrances against such Backslidings and Declinings: The seceding Ministers have never stated their Secession upon the *former*, but they do it upon the *latter*. The *Essay*, p. 16. gives us the following Proposition out of Mr. *Rutherford's Due Right*, p. 255. “ There is no just Cause to leave a less clean Church, “ if it be a true Church, and go to a purer and cleaner.” And he apprehends that this makes so much for him, that he puts it in the *Front* of the Paper which he calls his *short Vindication* ; but any who have read that Book of Mr. *Rutherford's*, will easily see, that he reasons against such who plead for the Necessity of *positive Evidences* and Signs of Regeneration in order to Church-communion, and who state Secession from a Church on account of personal Defects and Blemishes in the Walk and Conversation of Church-members : But as our Secession is not stated upon any such Principles, so this Proposition of Mr. *Rutherford's* is not at all to the Purpose. As for Instance, If any should separate from the Parochial Church of *Kinglassie*, and join themselves unto another which they apprehended to be more pure and clean, merely because the most Part of the Members of the said Church may want *positive Evidences* and Signs of Regeneration, I doubt not but all the seceding Brethren would condemn them, and would readily declare themselves of the same Mind with Mr. *Rutherford* in his *Due Right*. And as it is well expressed by him, in his last printed Letter directed to some Professors in *Aberdeen*, who were carried away into such Extremes ; “ If you “ exclude all Non-converts from the visible City of God, in

“ which daily, Multitudes in *Scotland*, in all the four Quarters
 “ of the Land, above whatever our Fathers saw, throng
 “ into Christ; shall they not be left to the Lions and wild
 “ Beasts of the Forest, even to Jesuites, seminary Priests,
 “ and other Seducers?—Nor can it be a Way appro-
 “ ven of the Lord in Scripture, to excommunicate
 “ from the visible Church (which is the Office-house of
 “ the free Grace of Christ, and his Draw-net) all the
 “ Multitudes of Non-converts, baptised, and visibly with-
 “ in the Covenant of Grace, which are in *Great Britain*
 “ and all the reformed Churches, and so to shut the
 “ Gates of the Lord’s gracious Calling upon all these,
 “ because they are not in your Judgment chosen to Salva-
 “ tion, when once you are within yourselves.” I wish such
 as are in Danger of these Extremes would seriously con-
 sider these and the like strong Scripture-reasonings con-
 tain’d in the foresaid Letter: But tho’ the seceding Bre-
 thren do not state Church-communion or Secession upon
 the above-mentioned Principles; yet they may very well
 affirm, with the whole Stream of reformed Divines, that
A visible Profession and Confession of the Truth is necessary
to the Constitution of such a particular visible Church, unto
which we may safely join in Communion: Or according to
 Mr. Gillespie, as he is cited, *Essay*, p. 3. “To maintain
 “ and profess the true Doctrine, and the true Faith, is
 “ by all Protestant orthodox Writers made one, yea, the
 “ principal Mark of a true visible Church.” They may
 likewise safely affirm with Mr. *Rutherford* in the Page
 above cited, “When the greatest Part of a Church maketh
 “ Defection from the Truth, the lesser Part remaining
 “ sound, the greatest Part is the Church of Separatists:
 “ Tho’ the manifest and greatest Part in the actual Exer-
 “ cise of Discipline be the Church, yet, in the Case of
 “ right Discipline, the best, tho’ fewest, is the Church;
 “ for Truth is like Life, that retireth from the manifest
 “ Members unto the Heart, and there remaineth in its
 “ Fountain, in case of Danger.” Here Mr. *Rutherford*
 writes very plainly: In the former Proposition, he tells
 us what is not Ground of Separation from a true Church;
 in this, he tells us what is Ground of Separation from a
 Church, even when the greatest Part make Defection
 from the Truth. The *Essay* but clouds and darkens the
 Matter, when he tells us, that surely Mr. *Rutherford*
 means “ of declared Defection from the Truth in Fun-
 “ damentals.” I have said enough upon the Point of *Fun-*
damental

damentals already ; I shall only subjoin the following Proposition concerning Fundamentals, advanced by Mr. *Rutherford* in the same Section, p. 229. " Tho' the Knowledge of Fundamentals be necessary unto Salvation, yet it cannot easily be defined what Measure of Knowledge of Fundamentals, and what determinate Number of Fundamentals, doth constitute a true visible Church, and a sound Believer."

6thly, It is one Thing to *depart* from Communion with a particular Church on account of her Corruptions, and another Thing to *unchurch* that same particular Church : I find these two frequently confounded, or reckoned one and the same Thing in the *Essay*, as p. 4. " Tho' some among us should be leavened with unsound Doctrine, and albeit there should be Faults both as to the Administration of Sacraments and Exercise of Discipline, it is far from being enough to *unchurch*, or occasion Separation from the Church of Scotland, seeing she doth not own nor approve of these." A Secession may be warrantably declared from a Church on account of her Corruptions and Backslidings, when yet she is not *unchurched* : It is hard to determine what Length a Church may go in Apostasy and Backsliding, before she is altogether unchurched ; the *Author*, if he pleases, may read to this Purpose one of his own Books, Mr. *Rutherford's* *Peaceable Plea*, Chapter 10. Tho' the Dissenters in *England* and *Ireland* have stated a Secession from the Church of *England*, on account of her Corruptions in Worship, Government and Discipline ; they do not therefore *unchurch* her : They do not refuse her the Character and Denomination of a *Protestant* Church ; nay, they do not dispute, that many have lived and died in Communion with the Church of *England*, thro' Ignorance of her Corruptions and the Sinfulness thereof, who have had Communion with Christ. And this leads me to take Notice of one of our *Author's* Arguments against Secession from the Church of *Scotland* in her present Constitution, on account of its Affinity with what is observed on this Head ; " Moreover (says he, p. 63.) to separate from the Church of *Scotland* at this Day, 'tis interpretatively a Condemning of Christ the Head of the Church, as if he was to be blamed, seeing he yet keeps Communion with her." All the Proof he brings, for the Support of his Argument, is some Words alledged from Mr. *Durham* ; but he has not thought fit to tell us in which of Mr. *Durham's* Works the Words are

to be found ; I cannot therefore pass any Judgment about them. I have given some Instances already, and I shall give no ere I have done, that our Author's Citations do not always support his Arguments, especially if they are taken in Connection with other Parts of the Subject out of which they are excerpted : But, with respect unto his above Argument against Secession, it leans evidently upon the following Proposition, *When we separate from a Church, we interpretatively condemn Christ, as if he was to be blamed for keeping Communion with any of her Members.* But I do not think that our Author will get any of our Presbyterian or Reformed Divines that will justify his Assertion ; they are all very cautious in determining what Length a Church may go in Defection or Corruption, before Communion is wholly cut off betwixt the Head and all the Members thereof : Tho' Corruption and Superstition can never have the Approbation and Countenance of Heaven, will it therefore follow, that, when we depart from Communion with a particular visible Church on account of her Corruptions, our Secession is " interpretatively a Condemning of Christ the Head of the Church, " as if he were to be blamed," if he in his adorable Sovereignty communicate himself and his Grace even to these who remain in Communion with a corrupt and degenerate Church ? The Sovereignty of Grace may be glorified amongst these, whom it is not safe nor warrantable for us to hold Communion with as Members of the same Ecclesiastick Body. The hidden and secret Communications of the Grace of the Redeemer, are neither the Standard nor Rule of our Duty ; therefore, tho' we have declared a Secession from the present Judicatories, it does not follow that we have *unchurched* them. Neither will it follow that we alledge, that none of the Members of this National Church, who are in Conjunction with the present Judicatories, have Communion with the Lord Jesus ; and far less will it follow, that our Secession is to be interpreted in the Manner above-expressed by our Author, which I shall not repeat.

7thly, Some are pleased to distinguish betwixt a *negative* and *positive* Secession from a Church, particularly the *Author* of the *Essay*, p. 9. with a manifest Design to fix a positive Secession (according to his Sense and Meaning of it) from the Church of *Scotland* upon the seceding Ministers ; and therefore it will be necessary that I explain what is commonly meant by the above Terms, as also that I

consider how far they are applicable to the *Secession* as it is stated at present by the *Associate Presbytery*. *Negative Secession* is, when a Person or Persons withdraw from Communion with a particular Church on account of some Corruptions that have taken Place, but have not Freedom as yet to meet together in distinct Assemblies for Worship and Government, in Expectation that the Corruptions complained of may be shortly amended by that particular Church from whom they have, in so far, seceded. Again, *positive Secession* is, when such as depart from Communion with a particular Church upon just and warrantable Grounds, do likewise meet together in distinct Assemblies for Worship and Government, after they have tried all the ordinary Means for removing of the Corruptions, or for Remedy of the Evils complained of; and yet in the mean Time the Means that they have used are so far despised, that the Corruptions and Evils complained of are persisted in and justified, and thereby all reasonable Expectation of reforming the said Corruptions and Evils is lost. The seceding Ministers will readily grant that they have upon the foresaid Grounds made a *Secession* both negative and positive from this *National Church* as she is now represented in her present Judicatories; but then they have always refused that they have made a *Secession* in either of the above Senses from the *National Church of Scotland*, when she is considered in her reformed Principles, with respect to Doctrine, Worship, Government and Discipline, as they have been laid down from the Word of God in her approved Standards, unto which all Ranks of Persons in the Land have bound and engaged themselves by solemn Covenant constantly and stedfastly to adhere. And here I would have the Reader carefully to observe the *Difference* between the *National Church of Scotland* in her excellent Constitution agreeable unto the Word of God, and as she is at present represented in her Judicatories, who are carrying on a Course of Defection, in letting slip, or departing from, such Reformation-principles as we in this *organick Church* have once professed, acknowledged, and sworn to maintain. I hope I may affirm in Behalf of the *Members* of the *Associate Presbytery*, that they desire thro' Grace never to secede from the Constitution and Principles of the *National Church of Scotland*, but to contribute their Endeavours for the Support and Defence of the same: And therefore they are not constituting a *distinct Church* from the *National Church of Scot-*

Scotland, but only, as a Part of that National Church, are endeavouring, in the Situation wherein adorable Providence has placed them, to cleave to Reformation-purity once attained unto in this Church, and to testify against a Course of Defection from the same, carried on by the Majority at this Day. For I have already observed, that every particular visible Church is related to the Catholick Body, as a Part unto the Whole: Hence it follows, that, in a National Church, every particular Parochial or Presbyterial Church stands in the same Relation to the National; consequently, when the greatest Part of the Representatives of a National Church are involved in a Course of Defection from the Principles of that Church, that *Part* of the National Church, tho' the *lesser*, who desire to cleave to their Constitution and Principles, and who for this End *associate* together, either in a Presbyterial or Synodical Capacity, to make an open and publick Profession of their said Principles, *are not a distinct Church* from the National, but a Part of the same only, however *distinct* they may be from the Majority of the present Representatives of that National Church, who are carrying on a Course of Defection in Opposition to the received Principles of that Church whom they represent. I must likewise observe, that, when Secession is stated from any particular Church upon just and warrantable Grounds, it is also the Duty of the Seceders to meet together in distinct Assemblies for Worship; in regard the publick Worship of God is what even the Light of Nature warrants, and what the whole Word of God does expressly oblige us unto, since the Time that Men began first to call upon the Name of the Lord: And therefore, if such as declare a Secession from a Church upon just Grounds, are warranted and obliged to assemble together for the publick Worship of God, then such as are Office-bearers among them have the very same Warrant to associate together for the Exercise of Government and Discipline.

From what is above observed, the Reader may see, that, as the Case stands betwixt the Associate Presbytery and the present Judicatories, the Question is not concerning Secession from the Church of *Scotland*, but concerning the Warrantableness and Justice of Secession from her present Judicatories, or from this National Church as she is represented in the said Judicatories: The seceding Ministers refuse Secession from the Church of *Scotland*, but affirm that it is their Duty to depart from the present

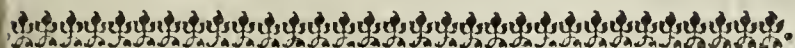
Judi-

Judicatories. Again, the Question is not concerning the rearing up of a distinct Church from the National Church of *Scotland*, but, whether or not these who are grieved with the Conduct and Management of the present Judicatories, have Divine Right and Warrant to associate together for the Exercise of the Keys of Discipline and Government in a distinct Capacity from the said Judicatories? Likewise, the Question is not concerning Secession from a Church holding and maintaining her Reformation-purity, but concerning Secession from such Judicatories as are letting slip that Purity once attained unto, or who are carrying on a Course of Defection from our Reformation-principles and Purity. Again, the Question is not concerning Secession from a reforming Church, or from Judicatories that are willing to be reformed; but concerning Secession from such Judicatories who refuse to be reclaimed, and who, instead of returning unto the Lord, are in several Instances backsliding more and more, particularly in the late active Concurrence of the most Part of the Ministry with an evident Encroachment upon the Crown and Kingdom of the Redeemer, by their reading in one Shape or other the late Act of Parliament anent Captain *John Porteous*, and in the universal silent Submission and Acquiescence of the Judicatories unto the said *Erastian* Encroachment and Usurpation. Also, the Question is not, If this or the other particular Step of Defection from our Reformation-purity, considered abstractly and in itself, gives just Ground of Secession from the present Judicatories? but the Question is, Whether or not a complex Course of Defection, and this persisted in after the ordinary Means have been used to reclaim them, gives just Ground for such who desire to be found faithful unto the Lord, to depart from Ecclesiastical Union and Conjunction with the said Judicatories, and to associate together in a distinct Judicative Capacity from them, in order to bear Testimony unto our Reformation-principles, and against such a complex Course of Defection from them, whereby the Bond of our Ecclesiastical Unity in the present Judicatories is dissolved and broke? The seceding Ministers have never stated their Secession upon any particular Step of Defection considered abstractly in itself, but upon a Series and Tract of Backsliding, or upon a complex Course of Defection from our Reformation-purity; as is evident from their first Testimony, p. 46. The seceding Ministers have just Ground to alledge, that the pre-

sent Judicatories refuse to display the Banner of a judicial Testimony for Truth; in regard they have neither expressly nor particularly condemned the many hainous Errors that have been brought to their Bar, whereby a dangerous *Syncretism* is introduced into this Church. They may likewise justly alledge, that there is a Series and Tract of Tyranny in the Administration, whereby the Flock of Christ are wounded, scattered and broken; as also, that the Crown-rights of the Redeemer have been profaned and cast down to the Ground of late, as well as in former Times; and that no judicial Testimony is lifted up for his special Prerogatives as King of Zion, nor for the Honour of his Kingdom; and that, in these and the like particular Instances, the Bond of our Union and Conjunction in this particular organized Church is dissolved and broken. And further, it may be alledged, That a Course of Defection is persisted in, notwithstanding of Representations, Remonstrances, and other ordinary Means that have been used by Ministers and other Church-members to bring the Judicatories to the faithful Discharge of their Duty; and therefore, that it is the Duty of all such Office-bearers in the Church of *Scotland*, who desire to keep the Word of the Lord's Patience, and to be found faithful unto him in this Day of Degeneracy and Backsliding, to depart from Ecclesiastical Communion with the present Judicatories, and, tho' they may be few in Number, to associate together for the Exercise of the Keys of Government and Discipline for the Ends for which they are committed unto them; or, that it is their Duty to do what they have a Right and Warrant to do, and what all Ecclesiastical Judicatories are commanded to do, as they would approve themselves unto the Head of the Church, and as they would answer the End and Design of their Appointment and Institution in the New-Testament Church, which is for the Support and Defence of the Truth; and for the Edification of the Body of Christ.

I shall only further observe, That when the complex Conduct and Management of the present Judicatories is considered, together with their Submission to such *Erastian* Encroachments and Usurpations which nearly affect their Constitution; the Question likewise is, Whether or not the present Judicatories of this National Church can be held and reputed as lawful and right-constitute Courts of Christ? I shall also consider the Question in this Shape,

shape, in stating the Argument for Seceſſion from the ſaid Judicatories. I proceed then to



CH A P. II.

Wherein the Argument for Seceſſion from the preſent Judicatories is ſtated, and alſo vindicated from the Exceptions laid againſt the ſame by the Author of the Eſſay.

AS the Queſtion is ſtated in the Cloſe of the prece-
ding *Chapter*, that which I am now to inſtruct
and prove is, That, when the Conduct of the pre-
ſent Judicatories of this National Church is conſidered,
all ſuch who deſire to ſtand upon our Reformation Bot-
tom and Ground, ought to *depart* from *Communion* with
them in their Judicative Capacity ; as alſo, that ſuch *Mi-
niſters* and *Elders*, who deſire to be found faithful to the
Lord, have Right and Warrant on their Side, from the
Word of God, and from the Acts and Conſtitutions of
this National Church agreeable thereto, tho' ſew in Num-
ber, to *associate* together, and to *exerciſe* the Keys of Go-
vernment and Diſcipline, that they may in a *Judicative*
Capacity *bear Teſtimony* to the Truths of God: againſt
the many Injuries that are done to the ſame, as alſo that
they may in the ſaid Capacity contribute their Endeavours
for the Help and Relief of the Lord's oppreſſed Heritage
through the Land. And, for Proof of this, I ſhall take
a View of the Church of *Scotland* as ſhe is *repreſented* in
her *preſent Judicatories*, both with reſpect to her Conduct
in doctrinal Errors, and alſo with reſpect to her Behavi-
our in the Exerciſe of Government and Diſcipline ; and
from her Management in theſe ſhall ſhew, that there is
too juſt Ground for *Seceſſion* from her ; and that ſuch *Mi-
niſters* and *Elders*, who endeavour to cleave to our Refor-
mation-principles, have Right, as is ſaid, to *associate* to-
gether in a diſtinct Capacity from the ſaid Judicatories :
And I ſhall conclude this Chapter with ſome Inſtances of
ſeveral Steps of Deſection that have taken Place ſince the
Seceſſion was firſt ſtated *Anno 1733*, whereby it will ap-
pear, that the preſent Judicatories, inſtead of reforming

and returning unto the Lord, have rather given Ground to the seceding Ministers to continue in their Secession from them.

S E C T. I.

Wherein it is proven, that this National Church, as she is represented in her present Judicatories, has not the Scripture-Character of the Church of the living God, 1 Tim. iii. 15.

I Have observed already, that it is a special *Character* of the Church of the *living God*, that she is a Society professing and confessing the Truths of God; hence she is designed, *the Pillar and Ground of Truth*, 1 Tim. iii. 15. The Popish Doctors do grossly abuse this Scripture, when they conclude from it the Infallibility of their Church; but our Reformed Divines do very well observe, that the Holy Ghost, in the above Words, plainly declares unto us one of the principal Ends and Designs of the Erection and Constitution of a visible Church in this World, with the Duty that is incumbent upon every particular Church, as she would evidence and manifest herself to be the Church of the *living God*. The Church is the *Ground of Truth*, that is, she ought to maintain, uphold and support the Truth, against all such Errors as may spring up in the Church, whereby the Truth may be anywise prejudiced: She is the *Pillar of Truth*, that is, she ought to publish, notify and declare the Truth, in such particular and distinct Terms, as every one may understand the Mind and Will of the Lord and Head of the Church; when Error is vented, she ought to give a certain and *distinct Sound*, that it may be known what is *Truth*, and what is *Error*. The Office-bearers of the Church are in a special Manner enjoined this Duty, therefore this is what is incumbent upon the Church-representative in a particular Manner: The Apostle *Paul* gives a particular Charge and Warning to this Purpose unto the Elders of *Ephesus*, *Acts* xx. 28, 29. As also, the Maintenance and Preservation of Truth, is a *Trust* committed unto the Office-bearers, which they are commanded to *hold fast*, 2 *Tim.* i. 13, 14. In every particular visible Church, whether National or Provincial, their Communion together is built upon their common *ὁμολογία*, or joint Profession and Confession of the same Faith: If, in a particu-

lar visible Church, every one have a *Doctrine*, and every one have a *Psalm*, there is nothing but Disorder and Confusion in the House of God; and if there is not a joint Profession of the Truth, in Opposition unto such dangerous Errors as may arise, a particular Church may soon become a *Habitation of Dragons*, instead of being the *House of God*; or a *Synagogue of Satan*, instead of being the *Church of the living God*. It is one of the special Uses and Ends of all publick Confessions of Faith, to hold forth from the Word of God the Truth, in Opposition unto such Errors and Heresies whereby Divine Truth may be subverted. But, if we take a View of the Conduct of the present Judicatories with respect to the dangerous Errors that have arisen amongst us, I must observe with Regrete, that this National Church, as she is represented in them, has not the above *Character* of the *Church of the living God*; tho' we have an excellent Confession of Faith, yet, through the Conduct and Management of the Judicatories, it cannot be looked upon any more as a fixed Standard and Test of Soundness in the Faith amongst them, as may be evident from the following Particulars.

A Scheme of Principles, eversive of that Scheme of Divine Truth laid down from the Word of God in our Confession of Faith, has been brought to the Bar of our Assemblies: As for Instance, Doctrines, whereby the federal Headship of the *First Adam* was impugned and denied, and consequently the true and proper Imputation of his first Sin to his Posterity is overthrown; Doctrines, whereby the hainous Desert of Original Sin imputed and inherent is diminished; as also Doctrines, whereby universal Grace is established, in so far as it has been asserted at the Bar of our Assemblies, that there is an implicate Offer of Grace, and an obscure Revelation of the Remedy provided for Sin, made to those that live without the Church, by the Works of Creation and Providence including Tradition; as likewise, in so far as a Connection is established, either from the gracious Nature, or from the Promise of God, betwixt the serious Endeavours of the Heathen, and a fuller and clearer Revelation of the Remedy unto them; and betwixt the serious Endeavours of those that are within the Church, and special and saving Grace: Doctrines also, whereby the absolute Dominion of God over the free Actions of the rational Creature, and the Creature's absolute Dependence upon him in Working, as well as in Being, are subverted, and consequently

a special Part and Branch of Divine Providence impugned : Doctrines likewise, whereby our Faith of the Truth of Divine Revelation is, according to Mr. *Lock's* Scheme, ultimately resolved into a Series and Train of Moral Arguments and Reasonings. As these and other pernicious Doctrines have been vented and maintained amongst us, so the Author of the *Essay* will be hard put to it to prove that they are not everfive of the Foundation; and however light some may make of them, yet, if they are seriously considered, it will plainly appear, that the whole System of Divine Truth, held forth from the Word of God in our Confession of Faith, is subverted by them: And it may be too justly said, that the Church has been leavened by the said Doctrines, seeing these dangerous Errors have been brought to the Bar of our Assemblies once and again, and the Standard of a Testimony has never been lifted up against them. When the above Doctrines were brought first under the Cognisance of our General Assemblies, they were dismissed *Anno* 1717 in some general Terms, and none of them were particularly and expressly condemned. And when the *Committee* of Assembly, *Anno* 1727, found it clearly proven that Mr. *Simson* persisted in teaching the same dangerous Scheme, yet the Assemblies of this Church have never given any Manner of Testimony against the same; neither does the Author of the *Essay* alledge, that any of them have been condemned, as contrary to the Word of God and our Confession of Faith. And, if this is duly considered, every unprejudiced Person may see, that there is no Truth in what is asserted concerning this Church, *Essay* p. 2. "As her Standards for Doctrine are pure, so she allows of no Errors in Doctrine." Tho' her Standards for Doctrine were never so pure or perfect, yet when Error is brought unto her Bar, and not condemned, she is justly charged with tolerating and allowing Error. It is evident, that tho' the Standards of a Church may be pure, yet, if Error is brought to the Bar of her Judicatories, and maintained as agreeable unto her Standards, and the Church says nothing to the contrary, that every one who adopt such dangerous Principles may reasonably judge in themselves, that the Church does not reckon the Errors they espouse to be contrary to her publick Standards. And this was the Case with Mr. *Simson*; he maintained, that the several Propositions which were owned and acknowledged by him, tho' of the above dangerous Nature and Tendency, were agreeable to the Word

of God, and nowise contrary to our Confession of Faith. Hence it is plain, that, with respect to the Errors asserted and maintained by Mr. *Simson* in his first Process, our Confession of Faith can no more be reckoned a fixed Standard, and Test of Orthodoxy or Soundness in the Faith, in Opposition to the said Errors, either in the Judicatories of the Church, or amongst such as are in Conjunction with them; in regard the *present Judicatories* have refused a Confession of their Faith, in Opposition to the above pernicious Errors maintained at their Bar as agreeable to the Word of God, and nowise contrary to our said Confession of Faith; and consequently they must be held as a *leavened Lump*, until the above-mentioned and other Errors are particularly and expressly condemned.

With respect to the second Libel against Mr. *Simson*, and the Errors vented by Mr. *Campbell*, if they are duly considered, it is to be regreted that it may justly be affirmed, that Errors everfive of the *Foundation* have been vented amongst us, and that the Judicatories have given no particular Testimony against them, even tho' the Venters of the said Errors have in like Manner pled that their Doctrines were nowise contrary to the Word of God, or our Confession of Faith. As for Instance, The *true Deity* of the Son of God is a *Foundation-truth*; as also, it is a *Foundation-truth*, That the Three Persons of the adorable Trinity are One Substance in Number: But it was clearly proven, both by the Depositions of Witnesses, and by Mr. *Simson's* own Papers in Process, that he had expressed himself in Terms subversive of these *fundamental* Truths. Yet the *General Assemblies* of this Church have never inflicted any Censure upon the said Mr. *Simson*, bearing any Proportion to the grievous Scandal and Offence he had given; yea, they have never particularly condemned the erroneous Propositions vented by Mr. *Simson*, whereby the Scripture-doctrine of the *Holy Trinity* is subverted; neither have they *asserted* the *Truth* in Opposition unto the Terms in which it has been *opposed* and *denied*: And consequently the present Judicatories have never to this Day lifted up a *faithful judicial Testimony* for the above Foundation-truths, and against the Errors that have been vented to the Prejudice of the same.

Likewise, a Scheme of dangerous Principles has been published and defended by Mr. *Campbell* Professor of Church-history at *St. Andrews*; and amongst others, in his *Preface* to his Discourse proving that the *Apostles* were not

Enthusiasts, he asserts, p. 5, 6. " That the Laws of Nature are in themselves a certain and sufficient Rule to direct rational Minds to Happiness; and that the observing of these Laws is the great Mean and Instrument of our real and lasting Felicity." And also in his *Enquiry*, p. 273. he asserts and maintains, " That if we settle it as our main Purpose, to recommend ourselves to the Love and Esteem and Commendation of God, and of all Mankind, thro' every Stage of our eternal Existence (*viz.* by our Moral Virtue, or by our Duties of Obedience unto the Moral Law) which, says he, if we follow Nature, we cannot but do; every Degree of Esteem we acquire here cannot but be exceeding grateful: The Prospect of being universally applauded for ever hereafter, must necessarily be very transporting; and the Means that lift us up to this Commendation, *viz.* Moral Virtue, cannot but prove extremely agreeable." From whence it is plain, that Mr. *Campbell* asserts, That the Practice of Moral Virtue is an instituted Mean for recommending us unto the Love, Esteem and Commendation of God; as also, That, in the Practice of Moral Virtue, we are to settle it as our main Purpose to recommend ourselves to the Love and Commendation of God thereby. The Author of the *Essay* may try if he can reconcile all the above several Propositions, considered together, with what he himself acknowledges to be a Foundation-truth, p. 26. " That our Justification is solely by the Surety's imputed everlasting Righteousness." Again, Mr. *Campbell* affirms, " That the sole and universal Motive to virtuous Actions is Self-love, Interest, or Pleasure, *Enquiry*, p. 463. and that Men may refuse to worship God, unless he presents himself favourably inclined to their Interest, and studious of their Happiness; and that in Matter of Devotion they are absolutely governed by Self-interest." To which I may add another of Mr. *Simson's* Principles, " That, were it not for the Prospect of Happiness, we could not, and therefore would not, serve God." The Committee of Assembly, Anno 1727, do give it as their Judgment, That this Principle of Mr. *Simson's* (which is the same upon the Matter with Mr. *Campbell's* Principle concerning Self-love and Self-interest) is evasive of the Foundation." For, say they, it is contrary to the Instinct of that new Nature the Lord endueth all his People with in Regeneration;—and that it is through a prevailing Respect to God's Honour and Glory, and

" not a mere or chief Respect to our own Happiness,
 " that the Difference betwixt Nature and Grace is to be
 " cleared to the doubtful Christian." And they add,
 'That the above Principle " is a sacrificing of all to the
 " Idol of ourselves, and a going only the Length of the
 " foolish Virgins, who may desire the Oil of Grace for
 " the Sake of their own Happiness; and that they may
 " enter into Heaven." *State Proc.* p. 277. If the General
 Assembly had approven of the above Judgment of
 their Committee, they had given some Testimony to the
 Truth; but they took no Manner of Notice of it: And
 tho' the above Doctrines, everlive of the Foundation, have
 been brought to the Bar of the Judicatories; yet none of
 them have been particularly or expressly condemned:
 And as for the Broachers of them, Mr. *Simson* was but
 slightly censured, and Mr. *Campbell* was dismissed from
 the Bar without any Censure at all; yea, his *Principle* con-
 cerning *Self-love* and Interest has been adopted by the *As-*
ssembly 1736 in their Act dismissing the Process, as the *As-*
sociate Presbytery have found, and give their Grounds and
 Reasons for it in their *Act* and *Testimony*, p. 65. and,
 since the Author of the *Essay* has not attempted to dis-
 prove any of the said Reasons, I need not insist upon the
 Vindication of them. Upon the whole, Since gross and
 hainous Errors, yea, Errors subversive of the Foundati-
 on, have been brought to the Bar of Judicatories, and
 since they have not been particular nor expressly condem-
 ned, nor the Truth asserted in direct Opposition unto
 them; With what Colour or Shadow of Reason can it
 be affirmed, that the *present Judicatories allow of no Er-*
rors in Doctrine? *Essay*, p. 2. Our Author likewise in a very
magisterial Manner asserts, " That it is unaccountable to
 " charge the Church of *Scotland* as Favourers of these
 " Errors, seing never so much as one Person in any of
 " the Judicatories of this Church offered to vindicate or
 " plead for any of these," p. 18. But tho' never one
 Person did plead for them under the Character of *Errors*,
 yet, has it not been pled before the Judicatories, that they
 should be dismissed without Censure? and, when an Act
 assertory of the Truth has been demanded, does not our
 Author very well know that it has been argued in open
 Court, that we were not to add *new Articles* to our Con-
 fession of Faith? And what could be meant by such
 Pleadings, but that our Confession does not determine
 particularly and expressly, in Opposition unto many of the
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gross and hainous Errors that have been vented? Yea, had not such Pleadings a direct Tendency to support Masters *Simson* and *Campbell* in their ordinary Plea, that their pernicious Errors were not contrary to our Confession of Faith? and, is it not plain, that the Judicatories have never particularly or expressly condemned any of them as such? If these Things are duly considered, our Author may easily see, that the Charge that is laid against the Judicatories, as Favourers of the Errors that have been vented amongst us, may be very well accounted for.

Tho' Mr. *Campbell's* Affair was sometime after the stating of the Secession, and tho' there was sufficient Ground and Reason given for declaring a Secession on account of the Conduct of Judicatories in the Affair of Mr. *Simson*, especially when the ordinary Means did not prevail for obtaining a judicial Testimony for the Honour and Support of injured Truth; yet, to prevent Repetition, I judged it proper in this Place to consider what relates unto Doctrine; and, for the same Reason, I shall briefly consider the Conduct of the Judicatories with respect to Doctor *Wishart's* Affair. The Presbytery of *Edinburgh* having excerpted out of two Sermons, preached and published by him, some *Propositions* which they alledged did either strike against the Use and Design of Confessions of Faith as Standards of Orthodoxy in a particular Church, or were contrary to some important Articles of our own Confession of Faith; when the Cause came before the *last General Assembly* 1738, the Managers for the Presbtery of *Edinburgh* insisted before that Assembly, that the particular Propositions excerpted out of the *Doctor's* Sermons should be judged, and that the Assembly should consider whether they were Errors contrary to our Confession or not. Tho' this Demand was just and reasonable, yet the Assembly thought fit to conduct themselves after another Manner; they heard the *Doctor* declare his Adherence to our Confession of Faith, and upon his declared Adherence to the several Articles of our Confession, unto which the Propositions taken out of his Sermons were alledged to be contrary, he is acquit from the Charge of Error. At this Rate, tho' one should teach and publish Error, if he shall declare his Adherence to our Confession of Faith, or if he has the Skill and Dexterity to impose some Sense upon the received Articles of our Confession, whereby he pretends to reconcile his own Tenets and Sentiments with them, he is immediately acquit from the

the Charge of Error. And who can doubt, that, where a Confession is authorised by the Laws of the Land, such as are not resolved to deprive themselves of the legal Benefice will own the said Confession, and profess their Adherence to the same, even when their Scheme of Principles is quite opposite to the genuine Sense and Meaning of a publick and authorised Confession of Faith? But, in the mean Time, when the Principles or Doctrines that Men have vented are not impartially examined and judged, as to their Agreeableness or Disagreeableness to that Scheme of Divine Truth laid down from the Word of God in our Confession of Faith, in this Case our Confession is of no Significancy to distinguish betwixt such as make a Profession of the Truth, and others; it gives no distinct nor determinate Sound in the Church, it is given up and abandoned as a Standard of Soundness in the Faith: And that this is the State of Matters at present in this National Church, as she is represented in her present Judicatories, is too evident from the several Instances I have given of her Procedure and Conduct in the doctrinal Errors that have been brought to her Bar.

From what is above-observed, the Reader may judge what Ground our *Author* has for that Confidence wherewith he expresses himself, p. 26. "I hope, *says he*, and "am confident, that nothing like these (*viz.* Errors ever-
" five of the Foundation) is to be found in the Church of
" *Scotland*; for she adheres to all the Doctrines contained
" in our excellent Confession of Faith." Notwithstanding of our Author's confident Boast, it is Ground of Lamentation, that even *such* Errors are to be found in the Church of *Scotland*; and it is also evident from what is already observed, that the Judicatories are so far from adhering to all the Articles of our excellent Confession of Faith, that they have dismissed *such* Errors from their Bar, without a direct and express Testimony against any of them. What he adds concerning the Engagements, that such as are licensed to preach the Gospel, or ordained to the holy Ministry, come under, to "assert, maintain and defend the
" Doctrine contained in the said Confession;" and their express disowning "all *Popish, Arian, Socinian, &c.* and
" other Doctrines, Tenets and Opinions whatsoever,
" which are contrary to, and inconsistent with, the fore-
" said Confession of Faith:" Neither doth this support our Author in his Confidence; in regard such as are licensed to preach, or ordained to the holy Ministry, may

reckon that they may warrantably *sign* our *Confession of Faith*, and make the above solemn Renunciation, in a *Consistency* with their *adopting* Masters *Simson's* and *Campbell's* Scheme ; and that for this Reason, Because the present Judicatories, who require the said Engagement and Declaration, had the above hainous Errors under their Consideration, and have neither found nor declared them to be contrary to the Doctrine held forth from the Word of God in our Confession of Faith ; neither have they found Masters *Simson's* nor *Campbell's* Propositions to be either *Papish*, *Arian*, *Socinian* or *Arminian* Doctrines. It may be reasonably judged, that when a Confession is signed, or any Renunciation of the above Nature is made, that both are done according to the declared Sense and Meaning of these who require the said Renunciation and Subscription : Can it then be imagined, that when some doctrinal Errors have been brought to the Bar of our Judicatories, and when they have refused once and again to condemn them in express Terms, as contrary to our Confession of Faith ; can it, I say, be imagined, that such who are solemnly engaged to adhere to the Doctrine of the said Confession, should thereby think themselves engaged against such doctrinal Points as the Judicatories have refused to condemn, or that they should look upon any of Masters *Simson's* or *Campbell's* Propositions to be either *Papish*, *Arian* or *Arminian*, which the Judicatories have refused to condemn as such ? Therefore there is no Ground for what our Author further adds for the Support of his confident Hope, “ If “ there be such abominable Hypocrites, acting below “ Men, as profess, promise and engage contrary to what “ may be their Sentiments, this is to be lamented, but “ cannot be absolutely prevented in any Church.” There would have been some Truth in what our Author asserts, if the Judicatories had discharged their Duty, in giving a particular and faithful Testimony against the Errors mentioned ; but, since it is otherwise, they may judge with themselves, that they are not engaged to any Thing contrary to their own Sentiments, even when they are the same with these of Masters *Simson* and *Campbell* ; and consequently they may reckon, that the Charge of being abominable Hypocrites cannot in Justice be laid against them.

Before I pass this Head, it deserves to be noticed, that the *Management* of the present Judicatories, in the Errors that have been brought to their Bar, has been not only different from, but the *Reverse* of, the Conduct and Practice of

of such Ecclesiastical Synods and Assemblies as in former or later Times have faithfully displayed a Banner for Truth: As for Instance, The first *four general Councils* did particularly and expressly condemn the several gross and dangerous Errors that did spring up in the Church, whereby the true Deity of the Son and Holy Ghost was denied, or the two Natures of the Redeemer confounded, or whereby the Unity of his Person was overthrown; and they also asserted the Truth in Opposition to the Terms in which it was either impugned or denied by the several Adversaries. Likewise the famous *Synod of Dort* did the same, with the several *Arminian* Errors that were brought to their Bar. Likewise the famous Churches of *France*, when *Piscator*, a very considerable Divine, published his peculiar Opinion concerning the *active Obedience* of Christ, tho' he was not a Member of that Church of *France*, yet they did, in their National Assembly at *Gap*, condemn particularly *Piscator's* Error, as contrary to their Confession of Faith; and warn'd Synods, Presbyteries and Sessions, to have a particular Eye upon Persons tainted with his Error, be they Ministers or private Christians: And, in their National Assembly held at *Rockelle*, they assert the Truth in express Terms, in Opposition unto *Piscator's* Error, who denied the Imputation of the active Obedience of Christ; the Words of that Synod are, "The whole Obedience of Christ, both in his Life and Death, is imputed unto us, for the full Remission of our Sins, and Acceptance unto eternal Life *." The *National Church of France* did testify in the same Manner, not only against Errors vented amongst themselves, but against Errors vented in neighbouring Churches, whereby they might be in Danger of being tainted; till they began to decline from their Reformation-purity, as in the Case of the *Universalists*, which was brought before the National Synods at *Alanson* and *Charenton*; and their Declining did gradually increase till Desolation came upon them.

And, since our *Author* has perused the *Acts and Decisions* of the National Synods of *France*, he could not but observe an agreeable Harmony between the Methods taken in reforming Times, by the Churches of *France* and *Scotland*, for preserving the Purity of Doctrine, by an exact and impartial Exercise of Discipline, in condemning all Errors whatsoever. Likewise he could not but observe, that the present State of the Church of *Scotland* in a great Measure

* *Quick's Syn.* Vol. 1. p. 227, 265.

Measure resembles that of the Church of *France* when upon the Decline; and that the Measures taken by their National Synods, when Errors and erroneous Persons were brought before them, exactly corresponds with these taken by our present Assemblies, of which we have a clear Evidence in the above Instance. And as this was a Fore-runner of their Ruin, so while we follow their Example, which, standing upon Record, should be a Warning to future Generations, 'tis to be fear'd that, in the righteous Judgment of God, sometime hence Strangers may have Occasion to say of us, as the Collector of these Monuments says of them, "O that the Generation which succeeded the first Reformers, had not lax'd the Reins! How happy might they have been! In the Morning of the Reformation they were fair as the Moon, clear as the Sun, and terrible as an Army with Banners. The greatest Princes of *France* submitted their Necks to this golden Yoke of Christ. A National Synod was formidable to the most daring Sinner. Their Discipline, duly and prudently managed, preserved the Purity of Doctrine, Worship and Morals amongst them*." Had our Author duly attended to these Things, I am perswaded he had not been so forward to acquit the Church of *Scotland*, and condemn those who oppose the Measures taken by her present Judicatories, with respect to Errors and erroneous Persons brought before them.

From the whole of what has been said, Since Masters *Simson* and *Campbell* have pled at the Bar of the Judicatories, that their Principles were nowise contrary to our Confession of Faith, and since the Judicatories have not declared their several Errors to be contrary to the same, tho' the above-mentioned and other gross Errors have been vented by them; hence it is plain, that our Confession of Faith cannot any more be judged a *fixed Standard* of Orthodoxy or Soundness in the Faith, at least with respect to these important Points that have been brought to the Bar of the Judicatories. And, from what has been said, I may likewise draw the following Conclusion, That this National Church, as she is represented in her present Judicatories, has not the *Character* I have mentioned of the Church of the Living God, in regard she does not *uphold* and *maintain*, *assert* and *confess* the Truth, in Opposition unto the many dangerous Errors that have been vented amongst us, which are either everfive of, or very nearly affect

* *Quick's Syn.* Vol. i. Intro. p. 16.

affect, the Foundation of our Christian Faith and Practice; and consequently we cannot have Union, Conjunction or Coalescence with them, as Parts and Members of that same Ecclesiastick Body; especially when it is considered, that, by their above Conduct and Management, they have broke and dissolved that *Bond* of our Ecclesiastical Union and Communion, which consists in our common *ὁμολογία*, or joint external Profession of the same Faith.

I reckon the Argument for Secession, as it is stated upon the Head of Doctrine, to be of considerable Weight; and therefore I shall briefly take notice of some Things alledged by the Author of the *Essay*, to take of the Force thereof: And I must judge, from the high Commendations that have been given to this Performance, he has offered the Force and Strength of what these who warmly condemn our Secession, have to say for themselves on this as well as one other Heads. Our Author, p. 113. states the Objection of *Separatists*, as he calls them, upon the Head of *Doctrine* after his own *Way*, and spends several Pages in his Answers unto it; but the Reader may easily see, that he has never stated the Argument in its true Light and due Force, and therefore his Answer unto it is only according to his Way and Manner of stating it. I shall not weary the *Reader* with every Thing that might be noticed upon this Head; I shall only take notice of some Things, on which the Author seems to lay the greatest Stress and Weight. He refers to what he had said in the Beginning of his *fourth* Chapter, which he reckons may be a sufficient Answer to the Objection. I have already considered what he has offered in the said Place, and therefore shall not insist further upon it. He adds, p. 114. "That, whatever heterodox or erroneous Principles some may be leavened with, they do not, nor dare they vent and openly avow them;" and concludes, "While they are not owned and defended, they cannot be charged upon the Church of *Scotland*." But, have not Masters *Simson* and *Campbell* openly avowed their Principles? have they not owned and defended them at the Bar? and have not the Judicatories refused expressly to condemn their Errors? Therefore, according to our Author's own Reasoning, their erroneous Principles may justly be charged upon the Judicatories of this National Church.

The Author of the *Essay* proceeds to give some more particular Answers to the Objection, as he states it: He owns, p. 115. that Mr. *Simson* "was too easy past, *Anno*

1717."—And, "That it was the Fault of the Church of *Scotland*, that she did not free that zealous faithful Servant of Christ, Mr. *James Webster*, from the Burden of a Prosecution by Libel; seeing that Affair was no personal Concern of his own." But if our Author had said that it was the Sin of this Church, and that it is a Ground of Mourning to this Day, that Mr. *Simson's* Errors were past in general Terms at that Time, without any particular express Testimony against any of his gross Propositions, he had spoke more to the Purpose. Our Author adds, that "Mr. *Simson* (upon the first Libel) declared his Adherence to our Confession of Faith and Doctrines therein contained, and disowned the Errors opposite thereto wherewith he was charged." Who doubts of Mr. *Simson's* declaring his adherence to our Confession? This both he and Mr. *Campbell* always did; they still pled the Doctrines they taught were agreeable to the Doctrines contained in the Confession: And this is what was the Sin of the Judicatories, that they did not declare their peculiar Doctrines to be what in very deed they are, *viz.* Errors, and contrary to our Confession of Faith. As for what is said of Mr. *Simson's* disowning the Errors opposite to our Confession, tho' our Author mentions this once and again, yet he clouds and darkens the Matter after his ordinary Manner. If he means that Mr. *Simson* refused that he had taught any Errors opposite to the Doctrine contained in our Confession, this is very true; for Mr. *Simson* always refused this Charge: But if, by disowning Errors, is meant his disowning the *erroneous Propositions* which in his *Answers* to his *first Libel* he asserts and defends as *Truths*, agreeable to the Word of God and our Confession of Faith, and which the Committee of Assembly 1727 found he continued to teach, it is, if I may use one of our Author's Phrases, an *Imposing* upon the World, when our Author affirms, he has disowned the Errors wherewith he was charged; and I may challenge the Author of the *Essay* to point me out any of his said Errors which he has disowned.

The Author of the *Essay* gives it as his *bumble Opinion*, anent the gross and damnable Errors in Mr. *Simson's second Libel*, that, "considering what an Affront was put upon the great God our Saviour by his erroneous Doctrine, he justly deserved Deposition from the holy Ministry for what was found proven against him at that Time." But yet, to extenuate the Matter, he subjoins some Declarati-
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ons and Acknowledgments which he alledges Mr. *Simson* made; and these are set down with the ordinary *Marks* of a *Citation*, but he has not directed us to the Place where they are to be found; and the Truth is, they are *nowhere to be found* in any of his Acknowledgments, recorded in the *State* of the *Process*, according to the Terms in which they are laid by our Author: And yet I find the Act of Assembly, dismissing the *Process*, makes use of the same Expressions with our Author, whereby Mr. *Simson's* Acknowledgments are represented in *fuller Terms* than what we have from *himself* in the said *State* of the *Process*. But yet, after all these *Endeavours* to dress up his Acknowledgments in the most *favourable* Manner, it is certain that he never made any till he was brought unto a *Pinch*, and then his Acknowledgments are in very *general Terms*. Tho' in his *first* Letter to the Presbytery of *Glasgow* he vents such Expressions as plainly derogate from the essential Glory of the most high God our Saviour, and tho' in his other Papers in *Process* he also subverts the Scripture-doctrine of the Trinity, yet he never makes any Acknowledgment of the Indignity that he has done to our glorious Redeemer; he never makes the least Acknowledgment, that ever he vented any Thing contrary to the Doctrine concerning the adorable Trinity, as it is held forth from the Word of God in our Confession of Faith: And therefore the Reverend and Worthy Author of the *Enquiry*, formerly mentioned, had just Ground for the following judicious Observe on Mr. *Simson's* *Declarations*, "Which
 " (*says he*) in Words may bear a sound Sense, but in my
 " Opinion are very little to be regarded, while he under-
 " stands them in a Sense consistent with his former Pa-
 " pers, and does not ingenuously retract his *Arian* Tenets
 " therein vented *."

It is alledged by the *Essay*, p. 116. "That the Church
 " of *Scotland* was so far from approving his Errors, that
 " as she found them relevant to infer Censure, which was
 " a plain Condemning of them; so, notwithstanding of all
 " said by him for alleviating of his Offence, the Assem-
 " bly 1728 censured him with the Sentence of Suspension,
 " &c." To which it is answered, That it cannot be al-
 " ledged that the Judicatories have ever found any of the
 " Errors contained in the *first Process* against Mr. *Simson*
 " relevant to infer Censure, and consequently they have never
 " plainly condemned them; and the like may be said of the

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Errors

Errors vented by Mr. *Campbell*: And therefore the Argument for Secession, as it is stated upon the Head of doctrinal Errors, stands still in its Force. And as to the Relevancy that was found in the Articles of Mr. *Simson's* second Libel, it is only a *general Relevancy*, and none of them are particularly declared to be contrary to the Word of God or our Confession of Faith. And here it must be observed, that, as the Libel is laid, Propositions *not necessary to be taught in Divinity*, and *which give more Occasion to Strife than to promote Edification*, are relevant to infer Censure, as well as those that are *expressly contrary to the Word of God* and our Confession of Faith. Now, in determining the Relevancy of the several Articles of Libel against Mr. *Simson*, the Assembly do not determine whether the Propositions libelled are such as are *expressly contrary* to the Word of God and our Confession of Faith, or if they are only such as are *not necessary to be taught in Divinity*: Hence, notwithstanding of what is alledged by our Author about finding the Articles of Libel relevant to infer Censure, the Judicatories have never yet declared them to be *contrary* to the Word of God and our Confession of Faith; and consequently the *Truth* in these important Points has never yet been *expressly asserted*, in Opposition to the Terms in which it has been opposed and subverted. With respect to the *Censure* inflicted upon Mr. *Simson*, tho' our Author declares that he justly deserved Deposition, on account of the Affront he had put upon the great God our Saviour by his erroneous Doctrine; yet he thinks fit to make an *Apology*, in the Page last cited, for such as voted only for his Suspension, and consequently for the Conduct of the Judicatories of this Church in passing him with a Censure nowise adequate to his Crime and Offence: "And (*says he*) 'tis well known
 " there were sundry in the Assembly fully of the Mind
 " he deserved Deposition, who yet, from Apprehensions
 " of as great or greater Damage to follow upon this to
 " the *Church of Christ* in Scotland, they only voted for
 " his Suspension; and I apprehend it flowed more from
 " this, than Lenity to him, that he was not deposed."
 And here, by the by, I may remark, that, if some others had used the Terms of *the Church of Christ* in Scotland, a grievous Charge had been brought against them; but, in regard I judge they may be used without any Derogation from the Divine Warrant and Authority for National Churches, therefore I shall pass them. In the above
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Words of our Author, the Reader is amused with some general and dark Expressions about *great or greater Damage* to follow to the Church upon the *Deposition* of an *Arian*, than if he was only *suspended*; he should have told us plainly, what these great or greater apprehended Damages were: Would the Deposition of one, who, as our Author acknowledges, had put an *Affront upon the great God our Saviour*, occasioned a *Division* in the Assembly, or a *Rent* in the Church of *Scotland*? Or, was the Sentence of Suspension agreed upon, to compromise the Matter betwixt such as were for *deposing* him, and such as were for *no Censure* at all, or, as it is expressed in the Act concluding the Process, with such as *give it as their Opinion*, that he ought to be *treated with more Tenderness*, in respect of the Declarations he had made, and the Alleviations that are said to be found in the Course of the Process? If this is our Author's Meaning, it is Ground of Lamentation that Matters were come to such a Pass in a National Assembly of the once famous reformed Church of *Scotland*, that there should be any Dispute or Hesitation about holding in Ministerial Communion one who had endeavoured to rob the Son of God of his true Deity; especially when it is considered what other dangerous Errors he had obstinately taught. Our Author makes liberal Acknowledgments that Mr. *Simson* deserved Deposition, and yet he makes use of all his *Art* and Skill to *extenuate* the Sin of the Judicatories; but I humbly judge they have a very *bad Apologist* for them, when he tells us of great or greater Damage to follow upon their casting out an *Arian* from Ministerial Communion with them. If a proper and due Testimony against an open Affront put upon the Son of God was neglected, in order to compromise Differences among themselves, it is a Sin that lies at the Door of this National Church, and for which we have Ground to fear that the Son of God, who hath said, *All the Churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the Reins and Hearts*, may yet plead a Controversy against us. Our Author subjoins an Evidence "that the Judicatories of the Church of *Scotland* are neither so corrupt
 " in Doctrine, nor so lukewarm in the Cause of Christ,
 " as Separatists represent;" namely, that, "According
 " to the Brethrens first Testimony, p. 49. it was contrary
 " to the declared Mind of most of the Presbyteries of
 " this National Church by far, that the Assembly 1729
 " did rest in the Sentence of Suspension against Mr. *Sim-*
" sen."

"*son*." But then, how comes it to pass that there was such an universal silent Submission to the above Sentence of that Assembly ? How comes it to pass that there was not a Presbytery in all the Church of *Scotland* remonstrating, before the Assembly 1730, against a Deed that was done contrary to the declared Mind of most Part of Presbyteries ? Ah ! how soon was this Concern for Truth, which our Author insinuates, and this Zeal for the Cause of Christ cooled ! Yea, so very low did it turn of a sudden, that, at the Assemblies 1730 and 1731, very few Synods and Presbyteries sent Instructions, Representations or Petitions for an *Act assertory* of the Truth, and a seasonable Warning against the Errors of the Time ; any Goodness that appeared amongst us was like the *Morning-cloud* and the *early Dew* that soon passeth away.

With respect to Mr. *Campbell's* Errors, the Author of the Essay reckons that his erroneous Propositions that were under the Consideration of the Judicatories were only "uncautious Expressions," and that "his Explanations might be sound and orthodox," p. 119. and he proceeds, p. 121. to purge Masters *Simson* and *Campbell* of Heresy, if the Word *Heretick* is taken in its strict Sense. And here it is proper to notice the Reason given by our Author, why neither of them can be called Hereticks, when the Word is taken in the strict Sense ; "For (*says he*) none of them offered to defend the erroneous Propositions as libelled, or in the Sense alledged against them." Their several Positions were laid in their Libels as Errors ; and it is very true, that none of them were so weak as to defend their Positions under the Notion of Errors. As for what our Author adds, *or in the Sense alledged against them* ; our Author does not alledge that they retracted any of their Propositions, but only that they did not own them *in the Sense alledged against them* : Therefore, according to him, they gave a sound Sense and Meaning unto the several Propositions that were libelled against them. I hope it will be allowed, that a Sense and Meaning, opposed to our received and approved Principles, was the Sense in which Masters *Simson's* and *Campbell's* Positions were libelled against them ; and it is very evident that they have all along defended their Opinions in a Sense directly opposite to the received Principles of the Church of *Scotland* : Therefore, whatever Art they have used, now and then, in colouring their Errors with sly Distinctions ; yet it must be owned by all who understand their

their Scheme, that they have defended their erroneous Positions as libelled, or *in the Sense alledged against them*: And, if our Author refuse this, let him give an Instance of such erroneous Propositions as Masters *Simson* and *Campbell* have explained into a sound Sense, and such as he will venture his own Character upon, that they are sound and orthodox; and, until he do this, I must either hold him as giving up the Question as he himself has stated it upon the Head of Doctrine, or that he has not understood their Principles: For when he says that *Mr. Campbell's* Explications *might be* sound and orthodox, to use one of his own Phrases, *some* may alledge that it is as much as if he had said he does *not know* whether they were so or not.

The *Author* of the *Essay* observes, from the *Presbytery's Act and Testimony*, p. 66. that they affirm, "That the Assembly 1736 adopted Professor *Campbell's* Principle concerning Self-love." And this they had good Reason to affirm; and our Author has never attempted to disprove any of the Reasons and Grounds that they have offered, why they judge it so manifest and plain. "But (*says our Author*) seeing they own *some worthy Men in that Assembly did not notice this*, it might been charitably thought this was a mere Oversight in the Assembly." But he does not fairly report the Words of the *Presbytery's Act and Testimony*; their Words are *, "The Case is so plain of itself, and from what has been observed, that nothing is necessary to be added, except to lament that God has left this Church so far as to adopt this Error, and that he so far deserted some worthy Men as not to notice it, and testify against it;" and this they had just Ground to say. Our Author adds, "And that they had no Design of adopting this Proposition is evident, in that not so much as one Person in all the Assembly did speak a Word against it; for it cannot be denied, some in that Assembly had the Interest of Truth as much at Heart as the Brethren themselves, &c." But this is so far from being an Evidence that the Assembly had no Design of adopting *Mr. Campbell's* Proposition concerning *Self-love* according to his Sense and Explication of it, that it is an Evidence to the contrary. And what tho' there were worthy Men in that Assembly, that had the Interest of Truth at Heart, who suffered it to pass without Opposition? This was indeed an Evidence that they were in this

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* *Act and Testimony*, p. 66.

Matter, as the Presbytery speak, so far deserted of God, as not to notice it and testify against it; but it is far from being an Evidence that the Bulk of that Assembly did not take up Mr. *Campbell's* Proposition in the Sense in which he understood it, neither was it an Evidence that the Assembly's Conduct in this Matter was a *bare Oversight*, as our Author speaks. And when he adds, "That Charity obliged to think that the Assembly hath not *wickedly* departed from the Lord in this Matter, nor adopted this Proposition as their Principle;" Tho' none will affirm that the Assembly adopted any Proposition under the Notion of Error, yet it is a *wicked Departing* from the Lord, when *Darkness* is put for *Light*, and when *Evil* is called *Good*, or when any Church-judicatory embrace Error as if it were a Divine Truth. Our Author likewise adds, "As the Assembly 1736 declared they had not passed a Judgment on Mr. *Campbell's* quarrelled Positions, so, tho' the following Assembly 1737 did not think the former Assembly had given just Ground for the above Charge, yet they declared their stedfast Adherence to the Principle of this Church, as contained in our Confession and Catechisms, as to our chief End in every Thing we do; which was a plain disowning that Principle of Self-love." But, did not Mr. *Campbell* in like Manner always declare his Adherence to the Principles of this Church? And did he not attempt to reconcile his Principles concerning Self-love with our Confession and Catechisms? Therefore the above general Declaration of the Assembly 1737 leaves us still at an Uncertainty what is the Doctrine of this Church concerning the Principle of Self-love, in regard Mr. *Campbell* may in a Consistency with his own Principle, as it is adopted by the Assembly 1736, acknowledge and declare in the same Terms with the Assembly 1737: Especially when it is considered, that the only Reason that is given, to prove that the Assembly 1736 did not adopt Mr. *Campbell's* Principle, is, That the said Assembly gave no Judgment or formal Sentence upon the Report of their Committee; whereas it is evident that the said Assembly do in express Terms declare, that "the examining and stating the Matter as has been done by their Committee, is sufficient for cautioning against the Errors that some at first supposed Mr. *Campbell* was guilty of." And it is no less plain, that the Committee, in examining and stating the Matter, have approved of the above erroneous Proposition, in respect that the Committee

mittee have declared " their Opinion and good Hopes
 " that Mr. *Campbell* had no unsound Meaning in asserting
 " Self-love to be the sole Principle, Standard and Motive
 " of all religious Actions; because he had declared before
 " them, That, by his saying that the chief or sole Mo-
 " tive to virtuous and religious Actions was the Desire of
 " our own Happiness, he meant no more but that our
 " Delight in the Glory and Honour of God was that
 " chief Motive;" which is the Proposition *in terminis*,
 which the Presbytery in their *Act* have asserted to be an
 Error adopted by the Assembly 1736.

I shall here consider another Exception laid by our
 Author against Secession on the Head of Doctrine, *Essay*
 p. 3. " The Act of Assembly 1736 (*says he*) anent Preach-
 " ing is a further standing Testimony of the Orthodoxy
 " of this Church, and of her Concern to have sound Do-
 " ctrine taught and preached by all her Ministers." And,
 p. 142. The said " is an *Act assertory* of most of the great
 " Truths which had been controverted." And, p. 175.
 it is called a " Warning at least to all Ministers and
 " Preachers against the *Errors* and *blasphemous Heresies*
 " *vented among us.*" But the above Act of Assembly, tho'
 it contains some good and excellent Things, is not an
 Act assertory of the Truth, in direct and express Oppo-
 sition to the many damnable Errors that have been brought
 unto the Bar of our Assemblies; neither does it bear any
 particular Warning against such dangerous Errors, in the
 Terms in which they have been asserted and maintained
 at the Bar of the Judicatories. Besides, if the said Act
 is reckoned assertory of the Truth, or a Warning against
 the Errors of the Time, what a very inconsistent Part did
 that Assembly act with themselves, when they dismissed
 from their Bar a Scheme of dangerous Principles vented
 by Mr. *Campbell* without any Testimony against them?
 And when this Assembly did the one Day build again
 what they pretended to destroy the other, can their Act,
 which our Author calls assertory of most of the Truths
 controverted, be reckoned a *standing Testimony* of their
 Orthodoxy, or Concern to have sound Doctrine taught and
 preached? Nay, have they not rather by such an incon-
 sistent Procedure made themselves *Transgressors*? *Gal. ii. 18.*
 To prevent Repetition, I shall here also notice what our
 Author affirms, p. 174. *viz.* " As to the putting a Bar to
 " violent Intrusions, the General Assembly 1736 revived
 " that old Act which declares against settling Church-
 " officers

“ officers *contrary to the Will of the Congregation.*” But, what Bar have they put upon violent Intrusions, when with the same Breath they appoint the Presbytery of *Stirling* to proceed to the Settlement of the Presentee to the Parish of *Denny*, and to be at Pains to bring the People of that Parish to *submit* to the *Decisions* of the Church? Let every unprejudiced Person judge, if such inconsistent Proceedings, in a Judicatory that bears the Character of a Court of Christ, have not a direct Tendency to expose and cast loose our Principles, instead of asserting and maintaining them.

Our Author, p. 122. alledges, That “ the not censuring Professor *Simson* and Professor *Campbell* according to the Demerit of their Offence, can be no such Step of Defection as is Ground of Separation: For (*says he*) sometimes the Church of Christ hath judged it convenient to pass the Erroneous without inflicting any Ecclesiastical Censure for their Offence.” And the Proof he brings of this is taken from *Acts* xv. where he observes, That the first New-Testament General Assembly or Council, tho’ they condemned the corrupt and erroneous Doctrine that was vented, “ yet (*says he*) we read not a Word of any Censure inflicted upon the Preachers or Teachers thereof.” But our Author would remember, that the *Secession* from the present Judicatories is not stated simply upon their *not inflicting due Censure* upon the Erroneous, but especially upon their *dismissing* them from their Bar, without *asserting* the Truth in Opposition unto their Errors, and without an *express Condemnation* of these Errors; and in this respect their Conduct was the *Reverse* of what was the Practice of that *famous Synod*, who particularly and expressly condemned the corrupt Doctrines that had then sprung up in the Church. When our Author affirms that there was not a Word of any Censure inflicted upon the foresaid corrupt Preachers and Teachers, he unwarrily pleads the Cause of the *Independents*, who affirm the very same Thing; but, in Opposition to them, our Presbyterian Divines do affirm, that this Synod at *Jerusalem* did “ put forth a critick or censuring Power, “ stigmatizing the false Teachers with the infamous Brand “ of *troubling the Church with Words, and subverting of Souls*, *Acts* xv. 24.” This was indeed a very high Censure, as the Author may find from the *London Ministers* in their *Jus Div. Reg. Eccl.* p. 226. and there he will find likewise a more solid Reason than that imaginary one which

which he alledges and pretends to answer, why that Synod did not proceed against the false Teachers by the Censure of Excommunication. And it is plain that the Point in question before the said Synod was a Point that had not been determined before that Time in the Christian Church; and therefore it was neither seasonable nor needful to proceed to a higher Censure than that which was already past against these false Teachers, until it should appear that they persisted in their Course, and were obstinate in the same, notwithstanding of the foresaid Synodical Determination. But tho' the doctrinal Errors which have been brought to the Bar of our Judicatories are such as stand condemned by our Confession of Faith, and the Confessions of other reformed Churches, yet, if the Judicatories of this National Church had condemned the said Errors, and declared the Teachers of them to be such as have *troubled us with Words, and Subverters of Souls*, tho' they had not proceeded to any higher Censure, I humbly judge the Argument had not been quite so strong, as now it is, for stating a Secession from them upon the Head of Doctrine.

I have now traced our Author in the several *Exceptions* against our Argument for Secession, as it is stated upon the Conduct of the Judicatories on the Affair of *Doctrine*; and it is plain from what is observed, that the Tendency of his Reasoning is to vindicate the Conduct, or extenuate the Sin, of the present Judicatories in the whole of their Management about this weighty and important Matter. As for the Treatment he gives some Expressions contained in the *Paper* given in by my Reverend Brother Mr. *Mair* to the Presbytery, together with his Retreat to the Assembly 1638, and his other common Topicks, which I know not how oft are repeated in his *Essay*, I shall consider them in their proper Place; only, before I pass this Head, I cannot but notice what a small Account this Author makes of the grievous Backslidings of the Church of *Scotland* from her Reformation-purity: "For (*says he*, p. 122.) 'most of the Things laid to the Charge of the Church of *Scotland* at this Day are only Omissions.' And, p. 174. when he mentions it as one of the principal Grounds of Secession, that no Warning hath been emitted against Errors and blasphemous Heresies vented amongst us, "For my Part (*says he*) I should be glad to see such a Warning;—but the Neglect of this is only an Omission." It seems that such *Omissions* make but a little Impression

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upon his own Mind; and he endeavours what he can, that his Reader may make as little Account of them as he does. Tho' our Seceſſion is ſtated upon *Commiſſions* as well as *Omiſſions*, yet I wiſh our Author would conſider that *Omiſſions* are ſo hainous and grievous in the Sight of God, that, when Sentence is paſt againſt Men at the great Day, *Omiſſions* are *only* mentioned, *Mat. xxv. 41, 42, &c. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no Meat, &c.* Omiſſions may even turn the pureſt Churches into Synagogues of *Satan*; if the Erroneous are not cenſured, and if Error is not condemned, a Society profeſſing to be a religious Society, may ſoon become a Herd of blaſphemous *Arians* and *Socinians*, and of wicked *Arminians*, or of the like groſs Subverters of the Truth, and of the Souls of Men: And therefore, whatever the Author of the Eſſay, or others, may think of the Conduct of the preſent Judicatories, in not condemning plainly the Errors of the Day, and in reſuſing to aſſert the Truth in Oppoſition unto them, yet from what is obſerved it may be evident, that their *Omiſſions* in this Matter are ſuch, whereby this National Church as ſhe is repreſented in her preſent Judicatories has forfeit a Claim to the Scripture-character of the *Church of the living God*, in regard ſhe does not uphold, ſupport, maintain and confeſs the Truth, in Oppoſition to the Errors of the Day: Yea, they are ſuch, whereby ſhe does not answer one of the ſpecial Ends of the Lord's rearing up and erecting a viſible Church upon the Earth, namely, That there may be an open and publick Profeſſion and Confeſſion of the Truth, to the Honour, the Praise and the Glory of our great IMMANUEL, who builds the Temple of the Lord, and bears all the Glory. Again, theſe Omiſſions are ſuch, whereby our Confeſſion of Faith is no more a fixed Standard and Teſt of Orthodoxy and Soundneſs in the Faith amongſt the preſent Judicatories, or theſe that are in Conjunction with them; and likewise, the ſaid Omiſſions are ſuch, whereby ſhe has practically let go, in her foreſaid Capacity, theſe Truths that were once received and confeſſed amongſt us, while our Confeſſion of Faith and the ſeveral Articles thereof were maintained and held in their genuine Senſe and Meaning. In ſine, the Omiſſions mentioned are ſuch, whereby one principal Bond of our Eccleſiaſtical Unity is diſſolved and broke by the preſent Judicatories. From all which it appears, that our Seceſſion from them as it is ſtated upon the Head of Doctrine is both juſt and warrantable.

rantable. I shall conclude this Head with an Instance or two, besides these I have already named, to shew how averse the primitive Christians were from the very Appearance of any religious Communion with the Erroneous. Mr. *Claud* reports, That, as for those who taught false Doctrine, the primitive Church never had any Union with them. "And (*says he*) not only the Ancients had no Communion with them, but, to shew how necessary and indispensable they judged a Separation from them to be, they went so far as to refuse Communion with the Orthodox themselves, when either by Surprise or Weakness, or some other Interest, they had received Hereticks into their Communion, altho' as to themselves they had kept their Faith in its Purity *." He gives two Examples of this Strictness in the primitive Church; The one is of *Gregory* the Father of *Gregory Nazianzen*, who, being deceived by a fallacious Writing, gave the Communion to *Arians*; whereupon "all the Monks of his Diocese, with the greatest Part of his Church, separated themselves from him, altho' they well knew that he had not changed his Mind, nor embraced Herefy." The other Instance he gives is that of the Orthodox of the Church of *Rome*, who refused to hold Communion with *Felix* their Bishop, "because he held Communion with the *Arians*, altho' he entirely held the Creed of the Council of *Nice*." *Claud* mentions these Instances, only to shew how far their Aversion went, which they had from holding Communion with the *Arians*, tho' he does not absolutely approve of the above Carriage: Neither can I justify the Carriage of *Gregory's* Church, who separated from him when he was imposed upon by a fallacious Writing; but their Carriage would have been more justifiable, if they had been in the same Circumstances with us, who have to deal with Judicatories, who, without any Imposition upon them, have held an *Arian* in Ministerial and Christian Communion with them, and have obstinately refused to give the Church faithful Warning against his Errors. The same Author likewise reports †, that *Faustinus*, in his Treatise against the *Arians*, says, "If any one did not believe that the Society of the *Arians* could be rendered culpable, under a Pretence that he had the Testimony of his own Conscience, which did not accuse him of having violated or renounced the Faith there; it belonged to such a one to take heed

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* *Claud's Hist. Def. Part 3. p. 8. † Ib. p. 25.*

and to examine himself: But, as for me, the Cause of God being concerned, I judge myself bound to be more cautioned, and to have a greater Fear than those Persons have." I shall only add what *Dupin* reports of *Hilary* Bishop of *Poitiers*, who, having come to the Synod that met at *Selucia* Anno 359, did, at his first Entrance into the Synod, make Confession of his Faith according to the Decisions of the Council of *Nice*, upon which he took his Seat in the Synod; but, when he observed that many of the Bishops were *Arians*, he departed, and would not be any more present with them*. It is to be observed, that the Synod admitted of the above Confession of his Faith; yet he would have no Church-communion where *Arians* were sitting as Members. Many other Instances to this Purpose might be given of the primitive Christians their refusing religious or Church Communion with the Adversaries of Truth, even where no such Thing was expressly required as an Approbation of the Principles of the Erroneous.

S E C T. II.

Wherein it is proven that the present Judicatories of this National Church are tyrannical in the Administration of Government and Discipline.

AS every Society in the World must have its own distinct Government within itself, without which it cannot subsist, but must needs fall into Confusion and Disorder; so the Church of Christ is a Society which must needs have some Order and Government within itself, for its own Preservation and Support: And therefore the Lord Jesus, who is faithful in all his House as a Son, hath not left his Church destitute of such a Mean, which is absolutely necessary for her Preservation and Subsistence in her present militant State; he upon whose Shoulders the Government is laid, and who is, by his Father's Designation and Appointment, King over Zion the Hill of his Holiness, hath settled the Order and Government of his own spiritual Kingdom; he has not left it to the arbitrary Will and Pleasure of Men, what Model and Form of Government should be set up in his Church; he has not left it to Men to give Laws unto his Subjects, in these Things that concern

* *Biblioth. Auct. Eccles.* Tom. 2. p. 138.

cern them as they are the Subjects of his spiritual Kingdom; neither has he left it to Men to give Officers and Ordinances unto his House according to their arbitrary Will and Pleasure: He has declared his Mind concerning all these Things plainly in his Word; there he has told us what *Officers* he has appointed in his House, and after what Manner they are to be set over his Flock and Heritage; there he has also declared his Mind concerning the *Courts* of his spiritual Kingdom, and all the Office-bearers in his Kingdom have their several Instructions delivered them, not from Men, but from him who is the only Lord and *Lawgiver* to his Subjects; and it is upon their highest Peril if they transgress them. Hence all the Subjects of his Kingdom are charged with the greatest Solemnity in the following Manner, *Ezek. xlv. 5. And the Lord said unto me, Son of Man, mark well, and behold with thine Eyes, and hear with thine Ears all that I say unto thee concerning all the Ordinances of the House of the Lord, and all the Laws thereof, and mark well the Entering in of the House, with every Going forth of the Sanctuary.* As for the Officers of Christ's spiritual Kingdom, the Apostle gives us a Roll of them, both extraordinary and ordinary, *I Cor. xii. 28.* The extraordinary Officers were *Apostles, Prophets*, such as were endued with the *Power of working Miracles, Gifts of Healings, and Diversities of Tongues*; but, the Scripture-canon being now compleated, the Church does not stand in Need of any such Officers. The ordinary Officers set in the Church are, *Teachers; Helps or Deacons*, who have the Oversight of the Poor; *Governments*, that is, *Governors or Rulers*; by whom the *Elder* that only rules is intended, the Abstract being put for the Concrete. As for the Manner how these Officers are to be given to the Church, they must be set over her by her own Choice, Call and Consent, *Acts i. 23. Acts vi. 3, 5. and xiv. 28.* Likewise, they must be authorised and set apart unto their respective Offices, *Acts vi. 6. 1 Tim. iv. 14. Rom. x. 15.* The former respects their Nomination or Designation unto their several Offices, and this belongs unto the whole Church; the latter respects their authoritative Mission, and this belongs only to such Office-bearers of the Church as have Power and Authority from the Lord Jesus for that Effect.

As for the *Courts* of Christ's spiritual Kingdom, these are either Congregational Eldershops, Presbyterial Meetings, or Synodical Assemblies. As for Synodical Assemblies,

blies, these are either *Provincial* or *National*, and, if the State of the Church did admit them, *OEcumenical*. We have the Divine Pattern and Warrant for such Assemblies, *Acts* xv. with *Acts* xvi. 4, 5. With respect to *Presbyterial Meetings*, the Divine Pattern and Warrant is very plain for them; as *Acts* xiii. 1, 2, 3. where we find several Teachers or Ministers of the Word *jointly* ministering unto the Lord, and at his Commandment and Direction exercising Acts of Jurisdiction, *v.* 3. as also, the Name *Presbytery* is expressed in Scripture, 1 *Tim.* iv. 14. holding forth a Society or Body of Elders associated together for the Exercise of Government and Discipline in the Church. Our Presbyterian Divines have made the same Thing evident from the Churches of *Corinth*, *Jerusalem*, *Ephesus*, &c. which were Presbyterial Churches, under the Inspection and Government of their Pastors and Elders associated in a Presbyterial Capacity. I refer the Reader to their Writings, particularly to the *Form of Church-government*, received and approved by this Church *Anno* 1645. I shall only further observe upon this Head, That Presbyterial Courts appear to be in a proper and strict Sense *radical Judicatories*, as is evinced by the Reverend and Worthy Author of the *State and Duty of the Church of Scotland*, &c. published *Anno* 1732, p. 95. for the following Reasons amongst others; 1st, "A Church-session
 " or Congregational Eldership supposes and implies a Pres-
 " bytery, as morally necessary towards its Erection, and
 " the Ordination of its constituent Members, without
 " whose Ordination that Session could not in an ordinary
 " Way have been erected; and, without a Presbytery
 " previously existing, these its Members the Ministers and
 " Elders could not have been ordained. 2^{dly}, A Synod
 " Provincial or National is so far from preexisting a Pres-
 " bytery, that it supposes and implies in its very Nature
 " and Constitution the Preexistence of Presbyteries, as the
 " Matter of its Being and Erection." With respect to
 Congregational Elderships, the Divine Warrant for them is concluded by just and necessary Consequence, from several Places of the holy Scriptures; as for Instance, when there is mention of a Plurality of Churches in the one Presbyterial Church of *Corinth*, 1 *Cor.* xiv. 34. as likewise where there is mention of the Church in such a House, as *Rom* xvi 5. 1 *Cor.* xvi. 19. *Col.* iv. 15. *Philem.* 2. As these Churches were single Congregations, so the *London*
Mini-

Ministers do well observe *, that these single Congregations have the Name and Nature of *Churches*, and therefore behoved to have the ordinary standing Officers that are set in the *Church*, viz. Pastors or Teachers, Governments or Elders ruling well, and Helps or Deacons ; and, if such single Congregations have the ordinary standing Officers, they must needs have likewise the Power of Rule and Government, for the Edification of the Body of Christ in Matters peculiarly belonging unto them, and which in ordinary Cases, according to the Rule of the Word, fall under their immediate Cognisance in these single or particular Congregations.

With respect to that *Power* and *Authority* that belongs to the several Courts of Christ's spiritual Kingdom, I shall not take upon me particularly to define or determine it ; only it is not a mere *consultative* Power and Authority : When no more is given unto the Courts of Christ's spiritual Kingdom, the Authority of the King of Zion is not represented or manifested in them ; they are robbed of the Key of Discipline, which is given by the Lord Jesus to the Office-bearers of his House ; they have no censuring Power with respect to Heresies, Scandal, and Obstinacy : If their Power is only consultative, the Censures of Reproof, Admonition, Suspension from sealing Ordinances, and Excommunication, cannot be inflicted by the several Ecclesiastical Courts above-mentioned ; tho' the Power of *Censure* is very necessary for preserving Soundness in the Faith, and Purity in the Walk and Conversation of Church-members. But yet, tho' Ecclesiastical Courts may proceed in an authoritative Manner, in the Name of the Head and King of Zion, their Power and Authority is *limited*, it is a Power for Edification ; they have not a *Lordly* and *Magisterial*, but a *Ministerial* and *Stewardly* Authority ; they have not a *Legislative* Authority, tho' they have a Power to declare and publish the genuine Sense and Meaning of the Laws of Christ's spiritual Kingdom, in Opposition to Corrupters and Subverters of the same ; they have a Power to apply the Doctrines of Faith, or the Truths of God declared and laid down in his Word, against emergent Heresies and Errors ; they have also a Power to apply the Censures of Christ's House to the Erroneous and Scandalous : They are not *Lords* over our Faith and Conscience, nor the *Rule of our Faith and Practice*, but *Helps* to both ; all the Office-bearers in
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* *Jus Div. Reg. Eccles.* p. 187.

the Church are *given* her, and consequently all Ecclesiastical Courts are instituted and appointed, for the *perfecting of the Saints, for the Work of the Ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ*, Eph. iv. 12. and according to our *Confession*, Chap. xxxi. § 2, 3, 4. But if Ecclesiastical Courts rule over the Flock of Christ with Rigour, if they refuse to publish and declare the Laws and Ordinances of the Lord Jesus in Opposition to Gainfayers; if they walk contrary to the Laws of Christ's spiritual Kingdom, or the Instructions that they have received from him; if they wound, scatter and break the Heritage of God; if they screen and protect the Erroneous or Scandalous; if they turn the Edge of Discipline against such as cleave to the Truth, and testify against Iniquity; then they are *unfaithful* to their *Trust*, and pervert the Keys of Government and Discipline, and they thereby forfeit their Claim to the Exercise of the Keys, till they repent and return to their Duty: And, in this Case, their Power and Authority may justly be rejected, as *tyrannical* in its Exercise, by the Subjects of Christ's spiritual Kingdom. And that this is the State of Matters with respect to this National Church, as she is represented in her present Judicatories, is what I am now to evince; and I hope the short Account that is given above of our Presbyterian Principles will not be judged foreign to the Purpose in Hand, especially when they are so much opposed even by some who not many Years ago distinguished themselves by a zealous Appearance for them; whereby some are in Danger to be carried away unto the *Sectarian* Extremes on the one Hand, and on the other Hand many are losing Sight of our Presbyterian Principles, by reason of the Conduct of the Judicatories, who, tho' they bear the Name and Character of *Presbyterian* Courts, yet, in the present Exercise and Administration of the Government and Discipline, do in their judicative Capacity oppose themselves unto our Presbyterian Form and Order, and walk contrary unto the special End and Design of the Ordinances of Government and Discipline in the House of God, as may evidently appear from the following particular Instances.

1st, That the *present Judicatories* of this Church are *tyrannical* in the Administration, may appear from their Conduct in the *Settlement of Ministers* in vacant Congregations. There has been for about Twenty Years bypast, and upwards, a continued Series and Tract of *violent Settlements*, whereby Ministers have been *intruded* upon dis-

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senting and reclaiming Congregations: As these violent Settlements have been countenanced and supported by the Authority of the Supreme Judicatory of this National Church, so they have taken Place many of them upon the Footing of *Presentations* in consequence of the *Act restoring Patronages*, and others upon the Footing of the *Act* past by the *Assembly* 1732 anent the Settlement of vacant Congregations. It is plain that a Legislative Power and Authority was exercised over the House of God in the passing of the foresaid *Act*, whereby the Flock and Heritage of God were spoiled and robbed of the Power of Choosing and Calling their own Ministers; and this Power was given up to *Heritors* under the general Denomination of *Protestants*, by which Means such as declare themselves opposite unto our Presbyterian Constitution were invested with the Power of giving Ministers to Presbyterian Churches. The foresaid *Act* was indeed *repealed* by the *Assembly* 1734; But, how was it repealed? Was it declared to be *sinful* or contrary unto our Presbyterian Principles and Constitutions, as they are asserted in our Books of Discipline, or other laudable Acts of this National Church? or, was the above *Act* declared to be a Violation of the Rights and Privileges of the Subjects of the King of Zion? No, by no Means; it was only repealed, because it was past contrary to some Forms appointed to be observed in the passing of Acts of Assembly: And therefore the Settlement of Ministers is to this very Day carried on, either upon the Footing of *Presentations*, or after the Manner prescribed in the *repealed Act*; and consequently the Judicatories of this Church, not only justify that *Act* in their Practice, but, by their habitual Procedure in the Settlement of Ministers, counteract the Ordinances and Institutions of Christ, and exercise a Lordly Dominion over the Heritage of God, whereby they are wounded, scattered and broken; and this is done notwithstanding of manifold Representations and Remonstrances to the contrary.

The Author of the *Essay* owns, that the Charge of violent Intrusions is what the Church of *Scotland* can least be vindicated from, p. 30. he likewise acknowledges that we have just Ground to lament the many violent Settlements that have taken Place: "But, says he, as there hath been a considerable Struggle made by many Ministers of this Church against them, a considerable Stop hath been put to them for some Time bygone." It is true, that both

Ministers and many other Church-members have made a considerable Struggle against them, as may appear from the Narrative I have given in the Introduction; but then such as are Strangers to Affairs amongst us in *Scotland*, and who read the above Words of our Author, may readily apprehend, that the Struggles he mentions have had such desirable Success, that the present Judicatories are repenting and reforming that Course of Violence which they have practised against the Lord's Heritage and Flock in *Scotland*: But I appeal to our *Author* himself, if he can honestly say, that the Judicatories are either *repenting* or *reforming* their Violence. Whether our Author's Words may be reckoned an Extenuating of the Sin of the Judicatories, or whether or not, as they are laid, they have an evident Tendency to impose upon the World, I leave it to the *Reader*, who knows the State of Matters with us in *Scotland*, to judge for himself: Only I may ask our *Author*, Can he give me an Instance in any of the General Assemblies for several Years bygone, wherein violent Settlements one or mo have not been either countenanced, supported, or expressly enacted? Before I have done, I shall give him particular Instances to the contrary. Here I shall only observe, that the Assembly 1734, whose Conduct and Management was much better than that of several Assemblies before, or of any that have followed, yet when the Case of the Parish of *Cambusnethan* was brought before them by an *Appeal* from a Sentence of the *Presbytery* of *Hamiltoun*, which had an evident Tendency towards a violent Settlement in the said Parish, even the foresaid Assembly remit to the *Presbytery* of *Hamiltoun* to proceed towards the Settlement of the said Parish as they shall judge best for the Edification of that Congregation: This was a Delivering-up of the Oppressed into their Hands who had given Sentence against them; for, who could doubt but that *Presbytery* would think it necessary to see to the Execution of their own Sentence? I should not have upbraided that *Assembly* with this particular Instance, if the Judicatories had been indeed reforming their violent Measures; but the following Assemblies one after another countenanced or supported, as I have said, the Settlement of Ministers over dissenting and reclaiming Congregations, tho' the Author of the *Essay* would have the World believe that a considerable Stop has been put to such sinful Practices for some Time bypast.

That the Settlement of Ministers over dissenting and

reclaiming Congregations is *Tyranny*, I need only appeal to the Reverend Mr. Currie in his *Jus Pop. Div.* Pref. p. 4. where he gives it as a Reformation-principle from *Calvin* and *Calderwood*, which he himself adopts, "That it is an impious Robbing of the Church, Rapine and Sacrilege, to settle any Minister whether the People consent or not." If our Author continues to own this, which he calls a Reformation-principle, it will be no difficult Matter to prove against him, that the present Judicatories are guilty of *Tyranny*, yea, of habitual *Tyranny* in the Administration. It is affirmed in the *Essay*, p. 29. "That he is not a Tyrant who is guilty of a few Acts of Oppression, but he who is habitually guilty of them in his Administration." He adds, "I think none will say the Church of Scotland is habitually guilty of Tyranny, and intolerable Persecution whether of Soul or Body." Can our Author have the Confidence to say, that the present Judicatories are only guilty of a few Acts of what he calls impious Robbery, Sacrilege and Rapine? I would gladly know what our Author reckons necessary to determine habitual Guilt: Can he refuse that a Series and Tract of Intrusions for a great Number of Years by-past, and these persisted in by the Judicatories, notwithstanding of Petitions, Representations and Remonstrances against them; Can he refuse, I say, that these are sufficient to denominate them habitually guilty of Acts of Oppression, or, according to our Author, of *impious Robbery, Sacrilege and Rapine in the Administration*? He speaks of intolerable Persecution of Soul and Body: Is not *impious Robbing* of Men of what belongs to them as they are Christians, a considerable Height of Soul-persecution? I know not what he means by intolerable Persecution; for the Faith and Patience of the Saints has overcome the greatest Tyranny and Cruelty, *Rev.* xii. 11. & xiii. 10. And as to Persecution of the Body; It is no Secret, but what is very well known through the Land, that Tenants have been frowned upon, and considerable Severities have been threatened against them, if they should not give in to the Man whom their Heritors have thought fit to chuse for their Minister: Can our Author say that there is no Persecution of Body in all this? And, do not the Judicatories support and encourage such Persecution, when they take the Heritor's Man by the Hand, and thrust him in upon a dissenting and reclaiming People? The *Essay* tells us, from

Rutberfoord *, "That a Tyrant is he who habitually Sins
 " against the Catholick Good of the Subjects and State,
 " and subverteth Law." But, is not that which our Au-
 thor reckons *impious Robbery*, a Subverting of the Laws of
 the Kingdom of Christ? Can our Author, who has profes-
 sed so much Zeal for the Rights of the Christian People,
 refuse that the *Catholick Good* of the Subjects of the Re-
 deemer's Kingdom is interested in the Election of Church-
 officers? It is reckoned an essential Point in the Consti-
 tution of any Civil Society, and what the Catholick Good
 of the Society is concerned in, who shall chuse their Ma-
 gistrates or such like Officers; and our Reformed Divines
 have reckoned it of as great Importance and Moment to
 the Church, who shall chuse her Pastors and Overseers.
 And here I shall give him the Words of a considerable
 Divine, for whom our Author doth sometimes express a
 very great Regard, *viz.* Doctor Owen, in his *Enquiry into*
the Original, &c. p. 181. speaking of the Things that are
necessary Fundamentals unto the Order of the Church,
on the Part of the Ministry, says he, "That all the Mini-
 " sters or Officers of the Church be *duly chosen* by the
 " Church itself, and solemnly set apart in the Church
 " unto their Office, according unto the Rule and Law
 " of Christ; this is fundamental unto Church-order, the
 " Root of it, from whence all other Parts of it do spring;
 " and it is that which is expressly provided for in the Scrip-
 " ture: If there be a Neglect herein, and no other Re-
 " lation required between Ministers, Elders, Rulers, Bi-
 " shops, and the Church, but what is raised and created
 " by Ways and Rules of Mens Appointment,—the Law
 " of Christ is violated, and the Order of the Church is
 " disturbed in its Foundation." And, if our Author is
 consistent with himself in his other Writings, I do not
 see how he can refuse that the present Judicatories in their
 Settlement of Ministers are guilty of habitual Sinning a-
 gainst the Catholick Good of the Subjects of Christ, and
 of subverting the Laws of his spiritual Kingdom; and,
 if he continues to own that the Intrusion of Ministers is
impious Robbery, *Sacrilege* and *Rapine*, how comes he to
 give the right Hand of Fellowship to such, by sitting in
 Judicatories with them? Can we have a Conjunction, as
 Parts and Members of the same one Ecclesiastical Body,
 with *impious Robbers*, and such as are guilty of *Sacrilege*
 and *Rapine*, and who refuse to repent and reform; and
 yet

* *Lex Rex*, p. 217.

yet at the same Time say, We are not Partakers of their Sins? I ask our Author again, Whether or not *impious Robbers*, and such as are guilty of *Sacrilege*, &c. deserve that the Censures of the House of God should be inflicted upon them? And, if so, then, according to our Author's declared Principles *, they ought to be separated from.

2dly, A second Instance that I give of Tyranny in the Administration, is the Conduct of the present Judicatories with respect to such as have endeavoured to *testify doctrinally* against the present Course of Defection. Tho' Ministers of the Gospel have it in Commission to *teach all Things whatsoever the Lord Jesus hath commanded*, and tho' they are obliged under their highest Peril to testify doctrinally against every publick Sin, *Isa. lviii. 1. Ezek. xxxiii. 7, 8.* yet, as I have noticed in the Introduction, when the Reverend Mr. *Erskine* Minister at *Stirling* did testify doctrinally from the Word of God against some of our Steps of Defection, he is brought to the Bar of the Judicatories, and the Assembly 1733 appoint him to be rebuked at their Bar, for *impugning Acts of Assembly and the Proceedings of the Judicatories*, in a Sermon at the Opening of the Synod of *Perth and Stirling*: And what were these Proceedings of the Judicatories which he impugned? Even the above-mentioned and the like, *viz.* the Imposing of Ministers upon dissenting and reclaiming Congregations.

3dly, A third Instance of Tyranny in the Administration is the Conduct of the present Judicatories, in *thrusting out from Ministerial Communion with them some Ministers* who have refused to submit to the above unjust Act and Sentence, whereby they judged their Ministerial Freedom was restrained, and who therefore *protested* for Liberty to testify on all proper Occasions against the Course of Defection carried on by the Judicatories: This was done by the foresaid Assembly 1733 in their Act and Sentence past against Mr. *Erskine* and three other Ministers, as I have also narrated in the Introduction. They were every one, in consequence of the foresaid Act and Sentence, first *suspended* from the Exercise of their Ministry, because they would not retract their above Protestation; this was done by the Commission of the foresaid Assembly: And afterwards, at another Meeting of the same Commission, they were *declared to be no longer Ministers of the established Church*, because they refused to submit to the Censure of Suspension, and continued to refuse to retract their Protestation.

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The Author of the *Essay* does not pretend to justify the above Sentence of the Assembly 1733: He tells us, p. 28. " I was and am sorry ever such a Sentence was past, where-
 " by these Brethren were cast out from the Communion of
 " this Church." I have no Ground to question our Author's Ingenuity, especially when he gave such a publick and solemn Evidence of what he affirms above, in a Sermon preached in the *Tolbooth-church* in *Edinburgh* that same Year, on the Fast-day before the Celebration of the Lord's Supper there, when, speaking of the Conduct of the Judicatories towards the protesting Ministers, he expressed himself in the following Terms; " That, tho' they should
 " suffer Suspension, Deposition, Imprisonment, Banishment, Heading or Hanging, I am convinced in my Con-
 " science they suffer for a good Cause, and the Lord will
 " own and honour them in it." I hope I shall be excused if I have for once reported a *Hearsay*, a Practice very frequent with our Author, and for which I have elsewhere condemned him: I should not have done it, if I had not very good Authority for it; and besides, I do not reckon it any way prejudicial unto our Author's Character. But I must be allowed to add, that I am also sorry, that, notwithstanding of his large Professions of Zeal against the Conduct of the Judicatories, he has not found them guilty of Tyranny in the Administration, neither in this Particular, nor in any other Instance whatsoever; yea, he does what he can to extenuate the Sin of the Judicatories, and for this End he brings in our reforming Period as more tyrannical by far in the Administration, and alledges, Nothing can be laid to the Charge of the present Judicatories, equal to these Acts of Tyranny which he thinks fit to condescend upon from the foresaid Period: But this I am afterwards to consider in its proper Place. Here I shall briefly notice a few Things that our Author offers for taking off the Force of our Argument as it is laid upon Tyranny in the Administration, in the particular Instance now before me: He alledges, in the first Place, That the Act and Deed of the Synod of *Perth* and *Stirling*, restoring the seceding Ministers to Ministerial Communion with this Church, to their several Charges, and to the Exercise of all Parts of the Ministerial Function therein, in consequence of the Power and Authority given the said Synod by the General Assembly 1734, " was, if not a formal,
 " ver a material Rescinding of the Sentences pronounced
 " against them," *Essay*, p. 165. In Opposition to this,
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the seceding Ministers affirm, That the Act and Sentence past by the Assembly 1733 is never to this Day either *formally* or *materially rescinded*; and they have given their Reasons for this, in their Paper intituled, *Reasons by, &c. why they have not acceded to the Judicatories, &c.* The Author of the *Essay* has never so much as attempted to enter into the Argument as it is laid in that Paper, nay, he has industriously shifted the same: As for Instance, he tells us, p. 165. "Whereas in Vindication of their not acceding, upon what was done by that Assembly and the foresaid Synod 1734, it is complained, *That Assembly did not themselves judge of the Legality of the Sentences pronounced against the Brethren as they ought, seeing the Synod could not do this;*" and for this he cites *Reasons not acced.* p. 23. I observed in my *Postscript* to the *Letter* mentioned above, that the Author of the *Essay* perverts our Words, and that as they are cited by him they are unintelligible, and that he appears to me not to have understood what he was attempting to answer. Upon this our Author, in a Paper he calls his *Short Vindication*, after some frivolous Criticisms, such as, "Whereas it is said, I pretend to give one of their Reasons, &c. this I refuse; I only say, 'Tis complained that Assembly did not, &c." Under whatever Shape he may think fit to take up our Words in the Page from which he pretends to cite them, they are laid as a Reason why the seceding Ministers judged the Act and Sentence past against them was neither materially nor formally rescinded. But I say, After two such insignificant Criticisms, and an Alledgance against some Words in our *Act and Testimony*, which I shall afterwards consider, he tells us, p. 8. *Short Vind.* "I gave what I took to be the Substance of that Complaint, tho' not precisely in their Words, nor did I say they were their Expressions." How comes he then to mark them with the ordinary Marks of a Citation, as if they had been our precise Words? It had been more fair if he had told his Reader, that he did not give our precise Words, but what he took to be the Substance of what he calls our Complaint. He transcribes in the Page last cited some Sentences out of which he had gathered what he calls our Complaint; but still they are unintelligible as he lays them, neither can they convey unto any that read his Book a just View of the Argument or Reason why the seceding Brethren judge the Act and Sentence past against them is neither formally nor materially repealed: And I doubt not to affirm, that the Reason as

It is there laid is such, as neither he nor any other can give a satisfying Answer unto. The seceding Brethren justly observe *, That the Assembly 1734, in their Act anent them, give full Power to the Synod of *Perth* to take the Case of the four Brethren, as it then stood, under their Consideration, and to proceed and do therein as they shall find most justifiable and expedient for restoring the Peace and preserving the Authority of this Church, &c. " But " with this express Direction, That the said Synod, shall " not take upon them to judge of the *Legality* or *Formality* " of the former Proceedings of the Church-judicatories " in relation to this Affair, or either to *approve* or *censure* " the same." The Brethren justly argue, That, from the above express Direction of the Assembly to the Synod of *Perth* and *Stirling*, it is plain, that the Act of Assembly 1733, and the Proceedings of their Commission thereupon, are nowise affected by the Act of Assembly 1734, either as to their *Legality* or *Formality*; that is, they are held and reputed to be formal and legal Deeds by the said Assembly, and the Synod of *Perth* is bound up from disapproving or *censuring* them. And, when the Assembly 1734 did neither disapprove nor condemn the foresaid Proceedings against the Brethren, it is plain the Synod could not: And tho' the Synod had disapproved and condemned them, when they are expressly discharged by the Assembly so to do, yet the Act of Assembly 1733 must still be reckoned a Deed of this Church, neither materially nor formally rescinded to this Day; for an inferior Judicatory can never repeal an Act and Sentence past by a superior, while they continue in Conjunction with and Subordination to them. If it is then enquired, What are the Powers given by the Assembly 1734 to the Synod of *Perth*? I answer, The Synod of *Perth* are only impowered to relax the four Brethren, upon some political Considerations, from the Sentences that were passed against them, *viz.* for preventing the " lamentable Consequences that have followed and " may yet follow upon their Separation from this Church, " and the Judicatories thereof." And, in the mean Time, the Act and Deed of the Assembly 1733 against them is held and reputed to be legal and formal, and is nowise to be censured by the Synod; and the Synod have accordingly relaxed them from the Sentences pronounced and execute against them, and this was all that was done, or could be done by the Synod, in consequence of the Powers

* *Reasons not acced.* p. 23.

Powers committed to them. I may here likewise observe, that the last Assembly 1738 give us the Sense that the present Judicatories have of the Act of Assembly 1734, when they mention it in the Preamble to their Act anent the seceding Ministers, as an aggravating Circumstance of their continued Secession, that this is done notwithstanding of the *Clemency* shewed to some of them in the Year 1734. The seceding Ministers have always pled for the Repeal of the Deed 1733 against them, not as an Act of Favour or Pity unto them, as straying Brethren, who deserved such a Sentence, but as an Act of Justice; and they have pled the Repeal of the said Deed, not merely as an Act of Justice to themselves, but as a Piece of Justice that should be done to injured Truth, namely, that an Act and Sentence condemning a faithful doctrinal Testimony against Steps of Defection, and likewise condemning a Protestation against the unwarrantable Exercise of the Key of Discipline, might not remain to future Generations as a standing Act and Deed of this National Church. When the Author of the *Essay* cites some of our Words, but yet never touches the above Reason why we judge the Act of Assembly 1733 was never yet repealed either materially or formally, the most favourable Construction that I could put upon his Conduct was, that he appeared to me not to have understood the Argument. He seems to be offended at this, and insinuates in his *Short Vindication*, that it is a bringing into Question his Intellectuals: But if he took up the Force of our Reasoning, and took no Manner of Notice of the same, which I have shown he has not, then he waved it industriously and with Design, and thereby imposes upon his credulous Reader, when he conceals the Weight and Strength of our Reason from him; and this was what I was very loth to impute unto him.

From what is above observed it is evident, that the Act of Assembly 1733 is a *standing Act* and Deed of this National Church, *never yet rescinded* nor repealed; therefore I shall not weary the Reader with tracing our Author further in the Answers he makes to the several Citations, which after his own Way he transcribes from our *Reasons of Not-accession*, in regard he never once touches the Argument, as the Reader may find, if he thinks it worth his while to compare with the fore said Reasons, the Citations taken from them, *Essay* p. 168, 169, 170. If I should tell our *Author*, that in some of these he has perverted our Words as much as in the above Citation which I have

examined, or that he has concealed the Force of our Reasoning in every one of them, I expect no other Answer from him, but that he has *given what he takes to be the Substance of our Complaint, tho' not precisely in our Words.*

It is like some may judge, that it is not of any great Importance in the present Question, whether the Act of Assembly 1733 against the four Brethren was rescinded or not, when the Execution of the Sentence against them was diverted: But it will be found to be of considerable Moment and Importance, when it is observed, that, by the Act and Deed of the said Assembly, a *doctrinal Testimony* against the sinful Proceedings of the Judicatories is *censured*, and thereby faithful Ministerial Freedom against a Course of Defection, as also a *Protestation* for Exoneration against such a gross Perverting of the Key of Discipline, are both *condemned*; by which Procedure I humbly judge, that not only our Principles as Presbyterians, but also as Protestants, are attacked, and a blind Submission and Subjection unto Judicatories, even when walking contrary to our laudable Acts and Constitutions, is established: And as this is a Piece of manifest Tyranny in the Administration, so it has a native Tendency to subvert our Constitution.

With respect to Ministerial Freedom in testifying doctrinally against the sinful Proceedings of Church-judicatories, it is plainly condemned by the Act of Assembly 1733, appointing Mr. *Erskine* to be rebuked at their Bar, for impugning, in his Sermon, Acts of Assembly and Proceedings of Church-judicatories: And, what were these Acts or Deeds of Assembly and Proceedings of the Judicatories which he impugned? Only such as concerned the violent Settlements of Ministers in vacant Congregations, in direct Opposition to our received and known Principles. But it is alledged, that the Assembly 1734 have declared for Ministerial Freedom in the plainest Terms, when, in their Act relative to the same, "they do, for the Satisfaction of all, hereby declare, that due and regular Ministerial Freedom is still left entire to all Ministers; and that the same *was not*, nor shall be held or understood to be, *anywise* impaired or restrained by the late Assembly's Decision in that particular Process," *viz.* in the Process against Mr. *Erskine*. Upon the above Words of the Assembly, the seceding Brethren justly observe in their *Reasons of not acceding*, p. 35. That they are conceived in very general Terms:

That

That they have not told us what they mean by due and regular Ministerial Freedom; and that it is plain, that, according to the Act of Assembly 1733, the doctrinal Freedom used by Mr. *Erskine*, and the Freedom which the four Brethren used in protesting for the faithful and free Exercise of their Ministry, was neither *due nor regular* Ministerial Freedom, in the plain Sense and Meaning of the foresaid Act of Assembly; and therefore they justly conclude, that the Assembly 1734, instead of *taking off* the Restraint that was laid upon Ministerial Freedom, do rather *approve* and *vindicate* the Act and Deed of Assembly 1733, when they expressly declare, "That due and regular Ministerial Freedom *was not anywise* impaired or restrained by the Decision of the said Assembly in this particular Process." But says the Author of the *Essay*, "This is not Matter of Fact (p. 171.) for it is a plain Misrepresentation of the Words of the General Assembly 1734 upon this Head; for that Assembly never says, *Ministerial Freedom was not anywise impaired by that Act 1733.*" What then do they say? O says our Author, they declare, "for the Satisfaction of all, that due and regular Ministerial Freedom is still left entire to all Ministers; and that the same was not, nor shall be held or understood to be, *anywise* impaired or restrained by the late Assembly's Decision," viz. against Mr. *Erskine* and the other three Ministers. Let the Reader now judge for himself on whose Side the plain Misrepresentation on this Head lies. It is but a very sorry Evasion, when the Author of the *Essay* adds, "As that Assembly 1734 declares for Ministerial Freedom in the plainest Terms; so, when they say, *Due and regular Ministerial Freedom was not held or understood* to be anywise impaired by that Decision, that Assembly *might* mean no more but only that they judged the Assembly 1733 did not design to restrain due and regular Ministerial Freedom by that Act; and so much the *principal Men* concerned in framing thereof did declare." It seems our Author was at an Uncertainty about the Meaning of the Assembly, when he tells us they *might* mean no more; but, to relieve himself of this Uncertainty, he has got out the secret Design and Meaning of the *principal Men*, &c And, after all, what is the great Discovery that he has made? It is even this, that they did not, in framing the Act 1733, design to restrain *due and regular Ministerial Freedom* by that Act. And, who doubts that the principal Men would

make this Declaration ? But, have they told our Author what they reckoned due and regular Ministerial Freedom ? Or rather, if he had enquired a little further into the Meaning of the principal Men, he might have found, that Mr. *Erskine's* doctrinal Freedom, and the Freedom used by the four protesting Ministers, was, in their Reckoning, neither due nor regular Ministerial Freedom : Yea, our Author, if he pleases, may see it with his own Eyes from their Act and Sentence ; for, if they had reckoned otherwise, they would never have passed such an Act and Sentence against the four Ministers. From all that is above observed it is evident, that the present Judicatories are tyrannical in their Administration, in so far as they condemn doctrinal Freedom against a Course of Defection, and have thrust out some Ministers from Communion with them, merely for protesting, for their own just and necessary Exoneration, against an unjust Sentence restraining Ministerial Freedom and Faithfulness, whereby the Key of Discipline is perverted, and the Ordinances of the King of Zion are changed, and the Covenant of *Levi* is corrupted by the above Conduct and Administration of the present Judicatories.

4thly, A fourth Instance I give of Tyranny in the Administration is, That, by the Acts and Constitutions of the present Judicatories, such of the Lord's People as live in Parishes where Ministers are intruded upon them, are required to *submit to the Ministry of such Intruders* ; yea, they are upon the Matter *excommunicate* from sealing Ordinances, if they do not submit to their Ministry. This is done by the Act of Assembly 1733 concerning some Ministers in the Presbytery of *Dunfermline*, whereby the Ministers of that Presbytery are inhibit and discharged to admit any of the Parish of *Kinross* to sealing Ordinances, without the Consent of the Intruder into that Parish, under the Pain of the highest Censures. It is alledged by the Author of the *Essay*, in Vindication of the present Judicatories, p. 34. " That the Assembly 1733
 " allowed some of these Parishes, who had Pastors thrust
 " in upon them, a Liberty of Church-privileges wherever
 " they might have Freedom to ask them ; which (*says*
 " *he*) was a material Testimony against Intrusions." And, p. 173. he alledges, that the foresaid Act is " materially
 " rescinded, in regard the Assembly left it to the Synod
 " of *Fife* to do in the Affair of *Kinross*, as to the admitting
 " that People to partake of Church-privileges, as they
 " should

“ should think fit ; and (*says he*) the Synod of *Fife* did, upon this, allow that People to have the Benefit of Church-privileges wherever they should think meet to ask them.” But I have evinced in the *Postscript* to the printed Letter, that the Assembly 1735 gave no such Allowance in the Terms reported by our Author : I have likewise observed, that the same Assembly did in like Manner refer the Case about the *Inrolment* of the Intruders in some of these Parishes to the respective Synods ; and, in consequence of this Remit, the Synod of *Perth* and *Stirling* did actually inrol the Intruder into the Parish of *Muckhart*. Hence, even according to our Author’s Way of Reasoning, that Assembly was so far from giving a *material Testimony* against Intrusions, that they have both *materially* and *formally countenanced* them, by allowing Synods to inrol Intruders. But I refer to what is more fully said upon this Head in the foresaid *Postscript*, where I have made it evident, that the Act of Assembly anent the Ministers of *Dunfermline* Presbytery is still a standing Act and Deed of this Church ; and it may be afterwards evidenced, that the Key of Discipline is thereby perverted, and that it is a considerable Piece of Tyranny in the present Administration.

5thly, The last Instance I give of the tyrannical Procedure of the present Judicatories is, the *Contempt* that they have cast upon the Petitions and Representations of Ministers, Elders, and other Church-members, when they have come to their Bar, spreading out their Grievances before them ; I have given particular Instances of this already in the Introduction, where I have made it evident from the Words of the Protestation signed by the Reverend Mr. *Currie* and other worthy Brethren, that the Conduct of the Assembly 1732 in this Matter was a Piece of the greatest Tyranny ; and therefore I shall not further insist upon it in this Place.

Upon the whole, If the several Particulars above-adduced are seriously considered, it will be found, that the present Judicatories of this National Church are guilty of an habitual Tract and Series of *Tyranny* in the Administration : Particularly, they are highly guilty of a habitual Tract of Violence and Oppression upon the Heritage of God, by the Intrusion of Ministers upon them ; as also, they are guilty of screening the Erroneous, in dismissing them from their Bar without any Censure at all, or without such a Censure as is proportioned to the Scandal and Offence

sence they have given; and at the same Time they have turned the Edge of Discipline against such as endeavour a faithful and conscientious Discharge of their Duty, either by thrusting them out from Ministerial Communion with them, who have endeavoured doctrinally or judicially to testify against a Course of Disfection; or by thrusting such out from Christian Communion, who refuse to submit to the Ministry of Intruders: They are likewise guilty of suffering such Acts, Deeds and Constitutions, whereby the Key of Discipline is perverted, to remain among the standing Acts and Deeds of this National Church; yea, they are guilty of neglecting and despising the humble Petitions and Representations, and the just Remonstrances, of Ministers and other Church-members against their unwarrantable Proceedings: In all which Instances, the Laws and Ordinances of the great Master of the House are counteracted, our Presbyterian Form and Model of Government is undermined, and the Bond of our Ecclesiastical Unity, in so far as it concerns the Government and Discipline of the House of God, is broken and dissolved. And the said Sin of Tyranny in the Administration is yet more highly aggravated when it is considered, that the present Judicatories justify themselves in what they have done, and refuse to acknowledge their Iniquity; yea, they persist in the same Course and Practice, particularly in the Imposing of Ministers upon dissenting and reclaiming Congregations, notwithstanding of the many dismal Effects that this has produced, even the wounding, breaking and scattering the Lord's Flock and Heritage through the Land.

S E C T. III.

Concerning the Administration of Gospel-ordinances by such as are imposed upon dissenting and reclaiming Congregations.

I Have already observed, that the Characters and Marks of a true Church, as they are laid in the 18th Article of our first Confession of Faith, are such as give us a Description of a pure Church as well as a true Church. A perfect Church is not indeed to be expected in this militant State; the purest Churches that ever were, may be compared to the Moon, which in her brightest Appearances has always discernible Spots: Yet a particular visible Church may, thro' the Grace of the Lord Jesus, attain

tain such a Measure of Conformity in her Doctrine, Order and Government unto the Pattern shewn in the Mount, that she may very well be denominate a pure Church; and such a Church is held forth unto us in the above-mentioned Article of our Confession: As Purity of Doctrine is the first, so the second Note or Character there given of a true Church is, "The right Administration of the Sacraments of Christ Jesus, which must be annexed unto the Word and Promise of God, to seal and confirm the same in our Hearts." Our reforming Fathers do also inform us, in the 22d Article of the same Confession, what they judge requisite unto the right Ministration of the Sacraments; "That Sacraments be rightly ministred, we judge two Things are requisite: The one, That they be ministred by lawful Ministers, whom we affirm to be only they that are appointed to the Preaching of the Word, into whose Mouth God hath put some Sermon of Exhortation, they being Men *lawfully chosen thereto by some Church*: The other, That they be ministrate in such Elements, and in such Sort, as God hath appointed; else we affirm, that they cease to be the right Sacraments of Christ Jesus." And what they mean by Men *lawfully chosen* to the Work of the Ministry, we may learn from the first Book of Discipline, Head 4. where they tell us, "That ordinary Vocation (*viz.* to the Ministry) consisteth in Election, Examination and Admission." And concerning *Election* they say, "It appertaineth to the People, and to every severall Congregation, to elect their Minister." Compared with Head 20. of the said Book, where they affirm, "That the Spirit of God inwardly first moving the Hearts to seek Christ's Glory and the Profit of his Kirk, and thereafter the Nomination of the People, the Examination of the Learned, and publick Admission (as before is said) make Men lawful Ministers of the Word and Sacraments. We speak of an ordinary Vocation, &c." From the above Words in the foresaid Article of our Confession, I observed, in my Postscript to the Letter on Secession, "That Mr. Currie cannot refuse that there are many who have been intruded into the holy Ministry, being Men that were never lawfully chosen thereto by any Church; and, according to the foresaid Confession, they are not lawful Ministers, neither are the Sacraments dispensed by them right ministrate; yea, according to the said Confession, they are not right Sacraments

" of Christ Jesus:" As also, " That Mr. Currie can-
 " not refuse that the present Judicatories support,
 " protect and countenance such Men, in the Exercise of
 " their Ministry, and in the Dispensation of the Sacra-
 " ments, whom the *Confession* declares to be no lawful Mi-
 " nisters of Christ." I add, That it may be surprising,
 that when Mr. Currie, *Essay*, p. 3. speaks of the second
 Note of a true Church, he should without the least Li-
 mitation or Restriction affirm, " I think none can object a-
 " gainst this, that the Seals of God's Covenant are as *purely*
 " administerate in this Church as ever they were in any."
 Having made the above short Observes in my Postscript to
 the printed Letter, p. 39, 40. the Reverend Mr. Currie
 in his *Short Vindication*, p. 5. reflects upon them in the fol-
 lowing Manner; " I must tell our Brother, It is an unac-
 " countable Imposing upon the World, to say, Our *first*
 " *Confession of Faith* denies that the Sacraments can be
 " rightly administered by such as have been intruded upon
 " Christian Congregations; or to say, The Sacraments
 " are not right Sacraments of Jesus Christ, which are ad-
 " ministrated by such Men." He adds, " This Doctrine
 " is enough to beget perplexing Scruples in the Conscien-
 " ces of poor serious People, so as to question whether or
 " not ever they have been baptised." He compares it to
Dodwell's wild Doctrine, of the absolute Necessity of E-
 piscopal Baptism; and he fears not to say, It is opposite to
 the Doctrine of all the Protestant Churches. Mr. Currie
 seems to have been in a more than ordinary Ferment when
 he writes at this Rate: I persuade myself, that, when he
 is in calm Blood, he will not justify himself in the above
 confident Assertions, that have more of Banter than of
 Argument or Reason. As to that of an *unaccountable Im-*
posing upon the World, I shall briefly notice what Mr. Cur-
 rie has advanced to deliver the World from this great Im-
 position upon them; and, in order to this, he affirms, that
 I labour under a Mistake; For the above Confession (says
 he) " makes only two Things requisite to the right Ad-
 " ministration of Sacrament: The first is, That Men be
 " lawfully chosen to the Work of the Gospel by some
 " Church or Judicatory thereof; for by Church a *Presbytery*,
 " or Ministers the Church-representative, who, according
 " to the constant Doctrine of this Church, are only clo-
 " thed with Authority to ordain Men to the Work of the
 " Gospel, is meant." But here Mr. Currie makes an Ad-
 dition to the *Confession of Faith*: Whereas the *Confession*,
 in

in giving the Characters of lawful Ministers, makes this one, *they being Men lawfully chosen to the Work of the Ministry by some Church*; Mr. Currie thinks fit to add, or *Judicatory thereof*; but the Confession has no such Thing. And whereas Mr. Currie affirms, that by *Church* is there meant a *Presbytery, or Ministers the Church-Representative*; I must tell him, that the Word *Church* is nowhere taken in this Sense in the said Confession: And besides, the Word *Church*, in the Place cited, cannot be taken in Mr. Currie's Sense; because the Confession speaks of *Election*, and not of the *Ordination* of Ministers: To *Choose*, and to *Ordain*, are quite different Things, and they have as different Meanings as they have different Letters, Syllables and Sounds. I have made it evident from the Words of the Book of Discipline above-cited, what our Reformers mean by *lawfully chosen* to the Ministry; and Mr. Currie knew some time ago very well how to distinguish betwixt *Choosing* and *Ordaining*, when he tells us in his *Jus Pop. Div.* p. 131, 132. that *Election* belongs to the People, and *Ordination* to the Presbytery. If the Confession had said they must be *lawfully ordained by some Church*, his Reasoning had been good Sense. I must also here observe, that according to our Author's *Jus Div.* Chap. 4. it is a Protestant Principle, asserted at the Reformation, That it belongs to the People to choose their own Ministers: And it is this very Principle that is asserted in the above Passage of the Confession; and it is the very same with that which is asserted in the 4th Head of the first Book of Discipline, which, Mr. Currie, in his *Jus Pop. Div.* p. 81. tells us, treats of Ministers, and their lawful Election. I shall only add, that when Mr. Currie, by the Church choosing a Minister, understands a Presbytery; he is now in so far agreed with the *Humble and modest Enquirer*: And I doubt not but this Author and his Followers will judge it their Duty to make their Compliments unto him for this liberal Concession that he has made them.

Mr. Currie alledges, as above, That what I have inferred from our first Confession of Faith, "is enough to beget perplexing Scruples in the Consciences of poor serious People, so as to question whether or not ever they have been baptised." To which I answer, That he himself has given real Ground and Occasion for such perplexing Scruples, by confounding two Questions that are quite distinct, namely, that about the right Ministration of the Sacraments, and the other about their Validity. Our Con-

fession, in the above-cited Article, asserts, " We flee the
 " Doctrine of the Papistical Church, in Participation of
 " their Sacraments; *First*, Because their Ministers are
 " no Ministers of Christ Jesus. *Secondly*, Because they
 " have so adulterated, both the one Sacrament and the
 " other, with their own Inventions, that no Part of
 " Christ's Action abides in the original Purity." Yet e-
 very Body knows, that the Compilers of our Confession,
 and other Reformers, never rebaptised any that were bap-
 tised in the Church of *Rome*, and that because she profes-
 sed the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity, and because Bap-
 tism is administrate by her Ministers in that adorable Name;
 as also, because some other essential Articles of Christia-
 nity, such as the Deity of the Son and Holy Ghost, the
 Incarnation of the Son, the Unity of his Person, and the
 true and real Distinction of his Natures, are held in that
 Church by outward visible Profession, conform to the De-
 cisions of the first four general Councils, against such as
 stated themselves Adversaries unto these important Points
 of our Christian Faith: For these and the like weighty
 Reasons, our Reformers acknowledge the Validity of the
 Sacrament of Baptism, tho' dispensed in the Popish Church;
 and yet, at the same Time, all the reformed Churches a-
 gree with our Confession of Faith, that the Sacraments
 had not that Rectitude and Purity which is required ac-
 cording to the Divine Institution, when administrate in
 the Church of *Rome*; not only because they are adulte-
 rate in the said Church by a corrupt Mixture of their
 own Inventions, but also because the Popish Ministers are
 not Ministers of Jesus Christ. In like Manner, all Pres-
 byterian Dissenters from the Church of *England* do justly
 maintain, that the Sacraments are not rightly administrate
 in that Church, by Reason of the Additions of Men unto
 the Divine Institutions; yet at the same Time they ac-
 knowledge their Validity, and never pled for the rebapti-
 sing of any that are baptised in the Church of *England*.
 Also in the late Times of Prelacy, tho' the Prelatick In-
 cumbents administrate the Sacraments in the same Man-
 ner as we do, without the superstitious Additions either of
 the Popish or *English* Church; yet the Presbyterian Church
 of *Scotland* refused to receive Gospel-ordinances from them,
 for this Reason, amongst others, Because they did not
 look upon the Bishops Underlings to be lawful Ministers
 of Jesus Christ; yet they never made a Question about
 the Validity of Ordinances dispensed by them. From
 what

what I have observed, I hope it is plain, that the Question about the right or pure Administration of the Sacraments is quite distinct from the other, about their Validity; and I cannot conceive how it entred into Mr. Currie's Head, or what good End and Purpose he intended to promote thereby, when he threw up *Dodwell's* Scheme in the present Dispute. The Doctrine advanced by himself, *Essay* p. 63. is more like unto *Dodwell's* wild Doctrine than any Thing I have advanced: If it is true that Secession from a Church is, according to our Author, a Condemning of the Lord Jesus if he keeps Communion with any of her Members; then, if our Author owns that Secession from the Church of *England* is warrantable and necessary, he must condemn the Head of the Church, if he communicate himself and his saving Grace to any who live and die Members of that corrupt Church: But our Author may find this Doctrine justly exploded by the Orthodox; and, to use his own Words, "I fear not to say, 'tis a Doctrine which is opposite to the Doctrine of all the Protestant Churches."

From what I have said, 'tis plain, that, according to the Doctrine delivered in our first Confession of Faith, two Things are requisite in order to the right Administration of the Sacraments according to the Divine Institution: *First*, That they be ministrate by lawful Ministers; and one of the Characters given us of lawful Ministers, is, their being *lawfully chosen* to the Ministry by *some Church*. The *second* Requisite is, That they be ministrate in such Elements, and in such Sort as God hath appointed: Hence I justly conclude, that such as are intruded upon the Church, or imposed upon Christian Congregations without their Call and Consent, as they run unto the Work of the Lord unsent, so they are not lawful Ministers of Christ; and consequently, that the Administration of Gospel-ordinances by such Intruders wants that Purity and Rectitude which the Divine Institution requires. Our Author in his *Short Vindication*, p. 6. proposes the following Question; "Such Men as going to the Plantations are ordained, could they not rightly administer the Sacraments, tho' as yet they have not been chosen by any particular Church?" To which I answer, If they are not chosen by any particular Church, yet neither are such Men intruded upon any particular Church; and this does very much alter the Case. But further, extraordinary Cases, such as the above Case supposed is, fall not under the pre-

sent Question: Our Author knew sometime ago how to distinguish betwixt ordinary and extraordinary Cases; for he tells us, in his *Jus Pop. Div.* p. 162. " That such is the
 " Peoples Interest in the Election of their Pastors, that
 " their bare Election is enough to make one a Minister
 " of Christ, where Ordination cannot be had according
 " to his Institution." Yet he very well knows, that, according to the Sentiments of Presbyterian Divines, the bare Election of the People in ordinary Cases will not constitute one a lawful Minister of Christ without Ordination. In like Manner, tho', in some extraordinary Cases, indefinite Ordination (as they term it) may be necessary and sufficient to denominate one a lawful Minister of Christ; yet in ordinary Cases, when one is appointed a Minister unto a particular Congregation, Ordination without lawful Election does not constitute him a lawful Minister of Christ. And if it is true, as Mr. Currie affirms in his Preface to the fore said Book, p. 4. " It is an impious
 " Robbing of the Church, Rapine and Sacrilege, to settle
 " any Minister whether the People call and consent or
 " not;" How can the Church be obliged to receive and acknowledge such as her lawful Pastors, who are impious Robbers, and who are guilty of Rapine and Sacrilege? Upon the Whole, it is evident, that the present Question is not about the Validity of the Sacraments dispensed by Intruders, but, Whether or not such should be held and repute as lawful and sent Ministers of Christ, who have not been chosen by any Church whatsoever, but who are imposed upon the Church while dissenting and reclaiming? And, if such are not to be held and repute as lawful and sent Ministers of Christ, whether or not the Administration of Gospel-ordinances by such has that Purity and Rectitude which the Divine Institution requires? And I humbly judge, that the above-cited Article of our first Confession of Faith decides both the Questions in the Manner I have already observed in my Postscript: And therefore, when Men are intruded upon the Church by the present Judicatories, and also countenanced and supported by them in their Ministerial Administrations, our Author might have spared, or at least he ought to have qualified, his confident Boast, *Essay* p. 3. " I think none can object
 " against this, that the Seals of God's Covenant are as
 " purely administrative in this Church as ever they were
 " in any."

Our Author, in his *Short Vindication*, p. 6. puts another Question

Question unto me, which I shall not decline to answer ;
 “ Will our Brother (says he) deny that the Sacraments
 “ could be rightly administrate by the great Mr. *Hender-*
 “ *son* when in *Leuchars*, albeit he was thrust in upon them
 “ at first ? ” To which I answer, There was a vast Difference betwixt *Luther* a poor blind Friar (as he speaks concerning himself) and the same *Luther* when enlightened in the Knowledge of the Truth : In the former Case, he was neither a lawful nor sent Minister of Christ according to our Confession ; yet, for the Reasons I have given, the Sacraments dispensed by him were valid. In like Manner, there was a great Difference betwixt Mr. *Henderson* the Prelatick Incumbent and Intruder in the Parish of *Leuchars*, and the same Mr. *Henderson* when converted by the Ministry of the famous Mr. *Robert Bruce* : In the former Case, according to our said Confession, he was not a lawful Minister of Christ ; yet, for the same Reasons, the Sacraments dispensed by him were valid. The *Essay* observes, p. 3. from the *Fulfilling of the Scriptures*, That Mr. *Henderson* having gone out of Curiosity to hear Mr. *Bruce* preach, the Words he first uttered from the Pulpit were, *He that cometh not in by the Door, but climbeth up any other Way, the same is a Thief and a Robber*. These Words were very close to the Case of Mr. *Henderson* the Intruder, and, as the *Essay* tells us, “ did, by the Lord’s
 “ Blessing, at the very present take him by the Heart,
 “ and had so great an Impression on him, that they were
 “ the Mean of his Conversion. ” If the present Intruders in the Church of *Scotland* would give the same Evidences of their sincere Repentance and Conversion which the great Mr. *Henderson* gave, I doubt not but all the Lord’s People through the Land would cheerfully embrace them as lawful Ministers of Christ ; and, if the present Judicatories of the Church would give the like Evidences of their Repentance for the Violence they have done to the Heritage of God, and their other Steps of Defection from our Reformation principles, our Secession from them would soon be at an End : But it is to be regreted, that the quite contrary Practice is pursued ; the Judicatories justify themselves in their sinful Proceedings, and Intruders hold themselves as lawful and sent Ministers of Christ : The Lord may justly say of us, as he speaks of *Judah* by the Prophet *Jer. viii. 6. I bearkned and heard, but they spake not aright ; no Man repented him of his Wickedness, saying, What have I done ?*

I have not declined to make Answer to such Questions as the Author of the *Essay* in his *short Vindication* has thought fit to propose upon this Head unto me; and therefore I may expect that he will not refuse to give me an Answer to the two following: The first is, Whether or not such as are intruded into the Office of the Ministry, or who are appointed Ministers over dissenting and reclaiming Congregations, should be received and acknowledged by the Church as lawful and sent Ministers of Christ, while they justify their Intrusions, and give no Evidence of sincere Repentance for the same? The second Question that I propose is, Whether or not Gospel-ordinances dispensed by such as are neither lawful nor sent Ministers of Christ, have that Rectitude or Purity in their Administration which the Divine Institution requires? As I have given my Judgment plainly upon both these Questions, and I hope according to the genuine Sense and Meaning of the above-cited Articles of our Confession of Faith; so I wish our Author would give a plain and direct Answer unto them, without amusing his Reader with *Dodwell's wild Doctrine*, and an extraneous Question about the Validity of Baptism. I shall conclude this Section with a Citation from a Judicious Divine, for whom our Author professeth a very great Regard, and which I think very applicable to the Case now before us, *viz.* Mr. *Durham* on the *Revelation*, in his Digression upon *Reading and Hearing*; "In Matter
 " of Hearing (says he) it is not so hard to discern who
 " are to be accounted to speak without God's Commission,
 " because ordinarily such have either no warrantable Call at
 " all (no, not in the outward Form, and so cannot be ac-
 " counted but to run unsent) or, by palpable Defection
 " from the Truth and Commission given them in that Call,
 " they have forfeited their Commission, and so no more
 " are to be accounted Ambassadors to Christ, or Watch-
 " men of his Flock, than a Watchman of the City is to
 " be accounted an Observer thereof, when he hath pu-
 " blickly made Defection to the Enemy, and taken on
 " with him."

S E C T. IV.

Wherein it is shown, that, by some Acts and Deeds of the present Judicatories, sinful and unwarrantable Terms of Communion are imposed upon the Members of this Church.

THE Author of the *Essay* grants, p. 36. that, when the least sinful Term of Communion is imposed upon Church-members, it is a just Ground of Separation from that Church : And the Associate Presbytery have affirmed in their *Act and Testimony*, That by some standing Acts and Deeds of this National Church, as she is represented in her present Judicatories, several unwarrantable Terms of Communion are imposed upon Ministers and other Members of the Church. Tho' I judge that I have evinced in the preceeding Sections, that the present Judicatories, in their Management with respect to the Doctrine, Government and Discipline, have broke the Bonds of our Ecclesiastical Unity ; as also, that they have forfeit their Claim to the Characters given us in the 18th Article of our Confession of a *true Church*, that is, of a Church which has attained such a Measure of Purity, that we may safely join ourselves unto her as Members of the same Ecclesiastick Body ; and tho', from what is already observed, it may clearly appear that Secession from the present Judicatories is lawful and warrantable ; yet I shall briefly notice what these sinful and unwarrantable Terms of Communion are, which the Presbytery affirm are imposed upon the Members of this Church ; and I shall also consider what the Author of the *Essay* has advanced, to take off the Force of the Argument for Secession, as it is stated upon sinful Terms of Communion.

The Associate Presbytery in their judicial *Act and Testimony*, p. 85. observe, That, by the Act of Assembly 1733, against Mr. *Erskine* and the other protesting Ministers, two sinful Terms of Communion were imposed ; *First*, “ That no Minister of this Church should testify from the “ Pulpit against Acts of Assembly and Proceedings of “ Church-judicatories, even tho' they were such as had a “ direct Tendency to undermine our Constitution. *Secondly*, “ That no Minister or Member of this Church should “ protest, for their own Exoneration, against Acts, Sen-
“ tences

“ tences or Decisions of the Supreme Judicatory, even
 “ tho’ they should nearly affect the publick Cause of God,
 “ and restrain Ministerial Freedom and Faithfulness in
 “ testifying against the Sins and Defections of a backsliding Church.” The Presbytery do justly conclude, that the Sentence of Rebuke and Admonition past against Mr. *Erskine*, on account of his doctrinal Freedom in testifying against the sinful Proceedings of the Judicatories, was an Act and Deed of the Supreme Judicatory, making all the Ministers of this Church liable to Censure, if they should testify doctrinally against the same or the like Proceedings of the Judicatories: As also, they judge ’tis plain, that the severe Sentence passed against the four protesting Ministers, on account of their Protestation, was an Act and Deed of the Supreme Judicatory, finding and declaring any Minister or Member of this Church obnoxious to Censure, if they should protest for their own Exoneration against sinful Acts, Sentences or Decisions of the Supreme Judicatory, restraining Ministerial Freedom and Faithfulness.

The Presbytery likewise judge, that by the Act and Sentence of the Assembly 1733, discharging the Ministers of the Presbytery of *Dunfermline*, under Pain of the highest Censure, to admit any of the Parish of *Kinross* to sealing Ordinances without Permission of the intruded Incumbent, two other unwarrantable Terms of Communion are imposed; the *first* whereof is, That, by the foresaid Act, Ministers are bound up from dispensing sealing Ordinances to such of the Lord’s People as have not Freedom to submit to the Ministry of Intruders, under Pain of the highest Censure. And, *secondly*, By the very same Act, all the Lord’s People through the Land are required to submit to Intruders as their lawful Pastors, or otherwise they are excommunicate from sealing Ordinances. The plain Import and Meaning of the foresaid Act is, That People must either submit to the Ministry of intruded Incumbents, or want the sealing Ordinances of the Gospel; and if any Minister shall venture to dispense them unto them, except in the above Terms prescribed in the Act, *viz.* the Permission of the intruded Incumbent, he must do it at his Peril, the highest Censures of the Church are denounced against him: This looks very like the tyrannical *Anathemas* pronounced by the Council of *Trent* against all the Protestant Churches who would not submit to their no less tyrannical Decisions.

The Author of the *Essay* grants, p. 36. That it is a sinful Term of Communion, "if a Church require of us
 "to condemn any Thing in our former Practice which is
 "just and lawful;" as also, "if they require us to con-
 "demn any Thing in the Practice of others which is
 "right and equitable." And he cannot refuse that Sub-
 mission to a Sentence of Rebuke for the Discharge of one's
 Duty, and the Retracting of a Protestation for Exonera-
 tion, which was demanded of Mr. *Erskine* and the other
 protesting Ministers, was a requiring them to condemn a
 Thing in their own Practice, which they judged upon
 good Grounds to be just and lawful; neither can it be rea-
 sonably refused, that when Ministers are convinced in their
 own Minds that it is the Duty of People to withdraw from
 intruded Incumbents, if notwithstanding of this they are
 discharged, under the Pain of the highest Censures of the
 Church, to dispense sealing Ordinances to People who
 live under the Ministry of such, then they are expressly
 required to condemn a Thing in the *Practice of others*
which they judge right and equitable: Yea, further, if
 People are by an Ecclesiastical Act and Sentence shut up
 under the Ministry of Intruders, they are thereby obli-
 ged, yea, they are forced as far as an Ecclesiastick Canon
 can do it, to own and acknowledge such for their lawful
 and sent Ministers, whom they are perswaded have run
 unseparated.

Tho' our Author does not pretend to justify any of the
 above Acts, yet he attempts to take off the Force of the
 Argument for Secession, as it is stated upon sinful Terms
 of Communion, in some Exceptions that he has laid against
 it. His chief and leading one is, That the above Acts of
 Assembly 1733 are materially rescinded, *viz.* the Act a-
 gainst the protesting Ministers, by the Act of Assembly
 1734 with Reference to the said Ministers; and the Act
 against the People of *Kinross*, our Author reckons, is ma-
 terially rescinded by the Assembly 1735, "Who (*he says*)
 "allowed the Synod of *Fife* to do in that Affair *as they*
 "*saw meet*, or should find most for Edification." There
 is no such extensive Remit of this Affair made to the Synod
 of *Fife* as our Author gives out: The Words, *as they*
saw meet, are added by our Author; they are not to be
 found in the Remit as it lies in the Index of the unprin-
 ted Acts. But I shall not insist further upon this, having
 in a former Section discovered the Weakness of this E-
 vasion, where I have endeavoured to prove, that there is

no subsequent Act and Deed of any Assembly since the 1733, whereby the Acts and Deeds of that Assembly are repealed either materially or formally; and consequently they are yet standing Acts and Deeds of the present Judicatories of this National Church, whatever Connivance there may be in the mean Time at the Practice of dispensing sealing Ordinances to such as are under the Ministry of Intruders; and I doubt not but the leading Men concerned in framing the Acts that our Author mentions, whereby he alledges the Acts of Assembly 1733 are repealed, will acknowledge so much when they find a proper Opportunity for doing so, whatever flattering Compliments they thought fit to make unto the Author of the *Essay*, at the Meeting of the last Assembly, for the good Service he had done them. We have one Instance of their making such Acknowledgments in the Act and Sentence past against the seceding Ministers at the said last Assembly, when, in the Preamble to their Act, the Act of Assembly 1734 anent them is declared to be only an Act of Clemency towards them.

If the former Exception is not sufficient to weaken the Argument, the Author of the *Essay* has yet another; "These Sentences (*says he*) were not sinful Terms of Communion to all the Ministers of this Church; for they respected the four Brethren allenarly." And, p. 182. "That Act (*viz.* the Act 1733) respected only the four Brethren." And in the same Page, speaking of the Act of Assembly concerning the People of *Kinross*, says he, "As it was only an Act in a particular Case, and an Act which only concerned the Presbytery of *Dunfermline* and Parish of *Kinross*, so it was no Term of Communion to other Ministers and Parishes." But, can it be presumed that a National Assembly should prescribe Terms of Communion to one Part of the Ecclesiastical Body, which do not equally, and for the same very Reasons, extend to the Whole, both Ministers and other Church-members, according to their different Situation and Circumstances? Our Author's Reasoning, both on this and on other Heads, may well deserve the Censure that he thinks fit to pass upon my Reverend Brother Mr. *Mair's* Expressions, *Essay*, p. 117. but I shall be far from making use of such Expressions; I may have occasion to notice them in their proper Place. I doubt not to say That it may ly open to any ordinary Capacity, who take notice of his Reasonings upon this Head, to observe how

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little Force or Weight there is in them, however fair and plausible they may appear to his credulous and inadvertent Reader. I shall only further add, When the General Assembly 1733 censure one Minister for a faithful doctrinal Testimony, is it not a publick Declaration of the Church represented in her National Assembly, that every other Minister who uses the same Faithfulness and Freedom must in like Manner be censured? Or, is not the above Deed a judicial Condemning of all such Freedom and Faithfulness? Again, when four Ministers are sentenced to Censure on account of a Protestation for Exoneration against the foresaid Deed, is not this a judicial Condemning of all Protestations of this Kind? Or, is it not a publick standing Declaration what any Minister or Member of this Church ought to expect if they presume to protest after this Manner against a Deed of a General Assembly? Likewise, when the People of *Kinross* are actually excommunicate from sealing Ordinances, does not this Deed of Assembly affect all those who are in the like Situation and Circumstances with them? Can our Author affirm, that when the Judicatories thought their Procedure just and reasonable with respect to Mr. *Erskine* and his Brethren, and with respect to the Presbytery of *Dunfermline*, that yet they would certainly judge the like Procedure with other Ministers and Presbyteries unjust and unreasonable? Or, will he refuse that the Judicatories by the above Decisions have laid down Precedents for all similar Cases? And, can he deny that the Decisions in the above Cases are recorded among the printed Acts of Assembly, which are acknowledged by the Church to be of publick Use? If the Author of the *Essay* shall duly consider these Things, I am perswaded he will find that the Evasion he makes use of here, *viz.* That the above-mentioned Acts are only *Acts in particular Cases*, has nothing in it but an empty Sound, however it may amuse and intangle his inadvertent Reader. I find nothing else from our Author that deserves any Notice on this Head, except his ordinary Retreat to the Assembly 1638, and the Proceedings of that Period, which, as I have already said, shall be afterwards considered.

As our Author grants that the imposing the least sinful Term of Communion upon us is just Ground of Separation from a Church, so, amongst the sinful Terms of Communion required by a Church, the last which our Author mentions, p. 37. is, "If they should require us to engage

“ for the future to abstain from what is seasonable Duty, “ and required of us in our Station.” And here I agree with our Author, providing he does not confine the Engagement he speaks of to an express formal Promise. I humbly judge that it is a sinful Term of Communion, when Conjunction with the Judicatories of a Church does in its own Nature involve Ministers in the Omission of such Duties as their Office and Station does oblige them to, and which the Providences of their Day and the Circumstances of the Church require from them : Or, the Conjunction mentioned is sinful, when it restrains the Office-bearers of the Church from the Discharge of any of the Duties of their Office. And, if this is the Case with us at present, then a Secession from the present Judicatories is necessary and warrantable, in regard we cannot continue in Conjunction with them, without abstaining from what is seasonable Duty, and what both our Station and the Circumstances of the Church require from us ; and consequently the Union with the present Judicatories, that is pled for, must be under such Terms as are sinful and unlawful : And that this is the Case at present, may appear from the two following Instances I give.

1st, A judicial Testimony for Truth, when opposed or controverted, is a Debt that the Office-bearers of the Church owe both to present and succeeding Generations : But the present Judicatories of this National Church refuse to assert the Truths of Christ, in Opposition to the Errors that have been vented in our Day ; they refuse to condemn several Errors, by which many important Truths, held forth from the Word of God in our Confession of Faith, are opposed and assaulted : How then shall the Duty we owe to the Head of the Church, or the Debt that we owe to present and succeeding Generations, be discharged ? If the minor Part, who are sensible of their Duty, continue in Conjunction with the Judicatories, they cannot lift up a judicial Testimony for Truth ; they cannot by any judicial Act or Deed condemn the particular Errors that are vented, or testify particularly against former and present Sins : The Majority bear the Keys of Government and Discipline, and the Minority cannot exercise them while they remain in Conjunction with them ; and therefore, since the ordinary Means have been used with the present Judicatories to engage them to their Duty, but without any Success, the Minority, tho’ few in Number, who are sensible of their Duty, ought to make a Secession from

from them, and associate together, that they may endeavour to discharge that Duty which their Office and the present Circumstances of the Church, threatened with an Inundation of pernicious Errors, does oblige them unto.

2dly, Many Congregations in *Scotland* are groining under the Load and Weight of Intrusions ; they want faithful Gospel-Ministers : But, how can such Ministers as pity their Case, take the proper Steps toward their Help and Relief ? How shall they license proper Persons as Probationers for the holy Ministry ? or, how shall they ordain and appoint Ministers over the oppressed Heritage of God, to labour among them in the Work of the Gospel ? There is no doing of this, while they continue in Conjunction with the present Judicatories. These, and several other Instances of this Kind, might be offered, to prove that a Conjunction with the Judicatories involves us in the Omission of such Duties as our Station and Character oblige us unto. But this leads me to enquire into the Right and Warrant that the Minority (tho' few in Number) in a Church have to associate together for the Exercise of the Keys of Government and Discipline, when the Majority are carrying on a Course of Defection from received Principles, and will not be reclaimed ; or, when they refuse to discharge their Duty, and cannot be prevailed upon to do it. I proceed then to

S E C T. V.

Wherein it is proven, that when the Majority of the Office-bearers of a Church do obstinately carry on a Course of Defection from Reformation-principles once attained unto, that the Minority in this Case, tho' very few in Number, have Divine Right and Warrant to exercise the Keys of Government and Discipline in a distinct Capacity from them.

I Have in the preceeding Sections made good the Charge that was laid against the present Judicatories of this National Church, when I stated the Question : Particularly, I have made it evident, that the Conduct of the present Judicatories, in the many important doctrinal Points that have been brought to their Bar, is such, that this Church, as she is represented in them, is not the *Pillar*

or Ground of Truth; and that our excellent Confession of Faith, thro' the Countenance and Support that has been given to many gross and pernicious Errors that have been under their Consideration, cannot any more be look'd upon as a fixed Standard of Truth, or of Soundness in the Faith, either in the said Judicatories, or amongst such as are in Conjunction with them. I have likewise evinced, that the present Judicatories are tyrannical in the Administration of the Government; and that not in some few particular Instances only, but in a Series and Tract of Oppression and Violence done to the Flock and Heritage of God, whereby the Keys of Government and Discipline are perverted, and a lordly magisterial Power is exercised over the Subjects of the King of Zion, evasive of the great End and Design of that Order and Government which he hath instituted and appointed in his spiritual Kingdom, viz. *the perfecting of the Saints, and the edifying of the Body of Christ*, Eph. iv. 12. Also, from what has been observed it evidently appears, that such are supported, encouraged and countenanced in Ecclesiastical and Spiritual Functions and Administrations, who are not lawfully chosen to the Work of the Ministry, but obtruded upon the Church, or imposed upon dissenting and reclaiming Congregations: And all this is done, yea, persisted in, notwithstanding of Petitions and Representations, and repeated Remonstrances from Ministers and other Church-members against their Proceedings. From all which it is plain, that this National Church, as she is represented in her present Judicatories, has not only broke the Bonds of our Ecclesiastical Union and Conjunction as a visible organick Body; but also, that she has not these Characters of a true Church, unto which we may and ought to join ourselves, as they are laid down by our Reformers in the 18th Article of our first Confession of Faith: And consequently our Secession from the present Judicatories is just, warrantable and necessary, ay and until they return to our Reformation-standards, agreeable to the holy Scriptures, the primary Rule and Standard, unto which all the Churches of Christ ought to conform themselves, Gal. vi. 16.

I proceed now to prove, that all such as desire to stand fast to our Reformation-principles, and to keep the Word of the Lord's Patience, have Right on their Side from the Word of God, and likewise from the Acts and Constitutions of this Church agreeable thereto, tho' few in Number,

ber, to associate together, or to constitute themselves into distinct Judicatories, for the Exercise of the Keys of Government and Discipline, that they may in a judicative Capacity bear Testimony to the Truths of Christ, against the manifold Injuries that are done to the same, in this Day of Defection and Backsliding; and that they may, in the said Capacity, assert the Rights of Christ's spiritual Kingdom, and the Liberties of his Subjects; and that they may contribute their Endeavours for their Help and Relief, in their present oppressed and broken Circumstances through the Land.

If we consider the primary End and Design, next unto the Glory of God and the Honour of our exalted Redeemer, of all Church Order, Government and Discipline, which is the Edification of the Body of Christ; and if we likewise consider for what End Pastors or Teachers are given unto the Church, namely, that they are set for the Defence of the Gospel of Christ, *Philip. i. 7, 17.* that they are particularly instructed, to teach the Observance of all Things whatsoever Christ hath commanded, *Matth. xxviii. 20.* that they are appointed to publish and declare, to uphold and maintain the Truths of God, which are either controverted or opposed, *1 Tim. iii. 15.* that they are commanded to feed the Flock of God, *1 Pet. v. 2. Acts xx. 28.* and to commit the Ministerial Trust unto faithful Men, *2 Tim. ii. 2.* When these Things, I say, are duly considered, it appears to me to shine with bright Evidence from the holy Scriptures, that when the Judicatories of a particular visible Church (which I have proven is the Case at this Day) do not stand for the Defence of the Gospel of Christ; or, when Error is so far supported and countenanced, that it is dismissed from their Bar either with a slight Censure or with no Censure at all; and likewise, when they exercise a lordly and magisterial Power over the Heritage of God, when they rule over them with Rigour; and when the Sword of Discipline is turned against such as are cleaving to Truth, and who endeavour to bear Testimony against a Course of Defection; and when such Judicatories refuse to return to their Duty; Then, and in this Case, the minor Part, tho' few in Number, may and ought to leave the backsliding Part, and have Divine Right and Warrant to associate together for the Exercise of the Keys of Government and Discipline, in the Defence of the Gospel of Christ, and for the Relief and Support of his Flock and the Sheep of his Pasture. This I have endeavoured

deavoured to prove from several Places of Scripture, particularly from *Jude* 3. and *Philip* i. 27. in the printed Letter, to which I refer. But, in regard I judge that the Controversy betwixt the Associate Presbytery and the present Judicatories turns very much upon this Point, I shall endeavour further to confirm and illustrate the same from the holy Scriptures, as also from the laudable Acts and Constitutions of this National Church agreeable thereto.

1st, As the Key of Doctrine is given by the Head of the Church to every Minister who has a Commission from him, so the Keys of Government and Discipline are given to the Office-bearers of the Church, two or more acting conjunctly, *Matth* xviii. 19, 20. The Right to exercise the Keys of Government and Discipline, in the Manner appointed by the Head of the Church, belongs to the Pastoral Office, as well as the Key of Doctrine: And that solemn Command given to the Office-bearers of the Church, *Acts* xx. 28. *Feed the Church of God*, includes the Pastoral Rule and Government; so much the original Word imports, as is very well known. Hence I argue, If the Majority in the Judicatories of a particular visible Church carry on a Course of Defection from received Principles, in the Manner I have proven the present Judicatories are doing, then the minor Part, who are grieved with their Proceedings, ought to leave them, and associate together for the Exercise of the Keys of Government and Discipline; otherwise they give up with the Exercise of the Keys to the Majority who are carrying on the Course of Defection. That they give up with the Keys, in this Case, is evident and plain; for the Majority must still be reckoned the Court, and they only have the Keys of Government in their Hand: And, when the Minority give up with the Keys to the Majority in the Case mentioned, many gross Absurdities follow; as for Instance, they give up the Exercise of the Keys to such as are perverting the Keys of Government and Discipline, and making use of them to Ends and Purposes quite contrary to these for which they are appointed by the Head of the Church; yea, the minor Part, who have not forfeit their Claim, give up the Government and Discipline to such who by their Mal-administration have *hic & nunc*, or in the present circumstantiate Case, forfeit their *Right* to the same; and consequently, by their continued Conjunction with them in the Judicatories, they support them, and strengthen their Hands in ruling over the Flock of Christ with Rigour,

gour, and in suffering Truth to ly wounded and bleeding in the Streets, without a suitable Testimony unto it: Yea, further, the Minority, while they continue in Conjunction with such Judicatories as are obstinately carrying on a Course of Defection, unwarrantably divest themselves of the above Grant of the Keys, which the Head of the Church has made unto all such as bear his Commission; and they leave the Government in the Hands of those who are spoiling the Vines, and who are wounding and scattering the Heritage of God; and at the same Time they leave the Lord's Flock and People, without Help and Relief, under the Oppression and Violence that is done them; and Truth remains injured and wounded without a judicial Testimony unto it: And consequently, by the said Conjunction, they strengthen the Hands of such as are carrying on a Course of Backsliding, and thereby become accessory to the Guilt that is contracted in the Judicatories. The only plausible Exception that can be laid against the foresaid Argument is, That if two or three may, upon alledged Defections and Backslidings, depart from Communion with the Judicatories of a Church, and erect themselves into a distinct Judiciary, then Order cannot be maintained, and the Unity of the Church cannot be preserved. To which I reply, That the Seccession as it is stated at present from the Judicatories is not upon merely alledged Defections and Backslidings, but upon such Backslidings and Defections as are justly charged against them, as I have proven in the former Sections. If it is urged, Who shall be Judge in the Justness of the Charge? or, who shall decide the present Question betwixt the associate Presbytery and the Judicatories? I answer, That we may appeal unto the Word of God the primary Rule and Standard, and to our other received subordinate Standards of Doctrine, Worship, Government and Discipline; let these be Judge in the Case betwixt the present Judicatories and the associate Presbytery; let these be Judge in the Charge that is laid against the Judicatories: Let their Proceedings and Managements, in the many particular Instances I have given, be weighed in the Balance of the Sanctuary; let them be tried according to the Acts and Constitutions of the Church of *Scotland* agreeable to the holy Scriptures. The Author of the *Essay*, who has undertaken the Management of their Cause against Seccession from them, never attempts

absolutely to justify any of the Instances of Defection and Backsliding I have given; tho' he does what he can to extenuate their Sin, as I have already observed: I leave it then with the Judicatories themselves, to judge how well he has acquitted himself in their Defence, and how far they are obliged unto him for the Service he has done them. With respect to the associate Presbytery, if they were adopting any Thing as a Point of Testimony, which is not founded upon the Word of God, and agreeable to our approved Acts and Constitutions; if they had espoused any Thing in their Testimony as a Principle, that was never espoused in this National Church in her reforming Times; the above Exception would be of Force against the Argument which I have brought for the Defence of their Presbyterian Association: But let all their printed Papers, particularly their judicial *Act and Testimony*, be searched, it will be found that they have asserted our Presbyterian Principles in a full and plain Manner; they have likewise asserted the Truths from the Word of God and our Confession of Faith, in Opposition unto many dangerous and pernicious Errors of the present Times; and the Steps of Defection which they have condemned, they have found them to be such as are contrary to the Word of God, our solemn Covenant-engagements, and our laudable Acts and Constitutions. Tho' the Author of the *Essay* discovers his critical Talent with Abundance of ill Humour against the seceding Brethren, and tho' he has stretched himself, as we shall afterwards see, in order to defame and discredit their Act and Testimony; yet he has not, neither can he charge them with any Principle adopted therein, but what has been received and confessed by this Church in her reforming Times. There are indeed some few Particulars, which our Author reckons controverted Points, and which the Presbytery have judicially declared to be Steps of Defection; but our Author has not, neither can he plead from any of these which he calls controverted Things, that the Presbytery have adopted any Thing contrary to our received and approved Standards. If it is still urged, Shall a few depart from a great and considerable Body? and, shall they take it upon them to emit a judicial Act and Testimony? Then let our Author and all whose Cause he pleads, know, that Numbers give not Authority nor Weight to a Cause of this Nature; it is only Truth that supports a religious Cause: And therefore tho' a Testimony may be despised on account of the Pau-

city of such as manage it, and tho' it may prove a very popular and amusing Argument to disregard a few departing from Ecclesiastick Communion with Judicatories consisting of great Numbers; yet Numbers have not always a Testimony for Truth on their Side. This was indeed one of the Arguments that the Church of *Rome* improved against our Reformers; but they were told, That a Testimony for Truth may be in the Hands of a few, even of two Witnesses, *Rev. ii. 3.* against a very numerous Body who had departed from the Truth and Simplicity of the Gospel.

2dly, All the Ministers of the Gospel are commanded to *take heed to the Ministry which they have received in the Lord, that they fulfil it, Col. iv. 16.* They must likewise teach the Church to observe *all Things whatsoever* her exalted Head hath commanded, *Mat. xxviii. 19.* They are also charged to commit the Ministerial Trust unto *faithful Men, 2 Tim. ii. 2.* Hence I argue, That such is the State of Matters in the present Judicatories, that all who would make Conscience of the Duties unto which they are obliged by the above and the like Scripture-commands that might be mentioned, ought to depart from Communion with them, and associate themselves in a distinct Capacity from them, in order to the Exercise of the Keys of Government and Discipline; in regard they cannot, while they continue in a Conjunction with them, discharge many of the Duties they are called unto, and which the State of Matters in the Church of *Scotland* at present requires. I gave some Instances in the Close of the preceeding Section, to evince that a Conjunction with the present Judicatories restrains and binds up such Ministers as are sensible of their Duty, and desire to discharge the same, from the Performance of some particular Duties, which the Command of the Head of the Church, their Pastoral Office, and the present State of the Heritage and Flock of Christ, do all oblige them unto. I shall here give some Instances of some particular Duties that ought to be discharged, and which cannot be done, unless such who are sensible of their Duty, and who are grieved with the present Proceedings of the Judicatories, associate together for the Exercise of Government and Discipline in a distinct Capacity from them.

1st, If the Office-bearers of the Church, particularly the Ministers of the Gospel, would *fulfil that Ministry* which they have received of the Lord, they ought not only doctrinally to declare the Truths of Christ, but also judicial-

ly assert them, in Opposition unto the particular Errors by which they are subverted in the Times and Places wherein they live: This I hope I have fully proven already, and I do not think the Author of the *Essay* will refuse it. But the present Judicatories of this National Church do obstinately decline judicially to assert the Truths, in direct and express Opposition unto many dangerous and pernicious Errors that have been vented among us; and consequently they refuse to fulfil that Ministry which they have received of the Lord: Therefore I conclude, that such who are sensible of their Duty, and who are grieved with the Injury that is done to Truth, ought to associate together, and, in the Name and Authority of the Head of the Church, display the Banner of a judicial Testimony for injured Truth, by condemning particularly and expressly such erroneous Propositions or Principles whereby the Truths of God have been openly and wickedly opposed and undermined, and by asserting the Truth in direct Opposition unto such gross and dangerous Errors whereby the Truths of God have been subverted amongst us. The Author of the *Essay* cannot refuse that the Judicatories have declined a suitable Testimony for Truth; for he wishes there were an assertory Act; and professes to regret the Omissions of Judicatories in this Matter: Tho', as we have already observed, he extenuates their Sin, and makes but a very small Account of such Omissions, tho' yet they are such as involve the Judicatories in the Guilt of supporting and countenancing many dangerous Errors; yea, they are such as are not only prejudicial to the present Generation, but also to the Souls of Posterity. If then these culpable and dangerous Omissions of the Judicatories are duly considered, how shall Justice be done to Truth? how shall the Banner of a judicial Testimony against Error be displayed? how shall the Redeemer have that Revenue of Honour and Glory which all the Churches owe unto him, namely, a publick and judicial Confession of his Truths, in Opposition to the Injuries and Indignities that are done them? how shall Ministers fulfil their Ministry, unless they depart from Conjunction with such Judicatories as decline to discharge this Duty, and associate together that they may make a joint, publick and judicial Confession of the Truth, in Opposition unto dangerous and pernicious Errors whereby the Truth is opposed or subverted? 2dly, If Ministers would fulfil their Ministry, they ought to set the Trumpet to their Mouths, and to

show unto the Lord's professing People *their Transgression, and the House of Jacob their Sin*, Isa. lviii. 1. It is not enough that Sin is doctrinally declared, it ought also to be judicially condemned: But we cannot expect that the present Judicatories will condemn particularly the Backslidings and Defections of former Times, when they refuse to acknowledge and condemn the sinful Steps that they themselves have taken; as for Instance, that Act of Assembly 1732, whereby the Rights and Privileges of Christ's Subjects, in chusing and calling of their own Ministers, were delivered up even to the declared Enemies of our Presbyterian Constitution. It was repealed, because it was past contrary to some Rules directing after what Manner Acts of general Concern should be concluded; but it was never condemned as contrary to the Word of God, and the laudable Acts and Constitutions of this Church, directing how Ministers ought to be called and chosen: Yea, the present Judicatories are so far from acknowledging and condemning violent Intrusions, that they are carried on with an high Hand to this very Day. Likewise, of late, the Sabbath of the Lord was profaned, and the immediate Subordination of the Courts of Christ's spiritual Kingdom to the Lord Jesus the alone Head and King of Zion, was practically given up, by Ministers their reading from the Pulpit the Act of Parliament anent Captain *John Porteous*. It cannot be expected that the present Judicatories will condemn this Deed, whereby the Headship and Sovereignty of Christ over the Courts of his own House was invaded, and his holy Day profaned; when the most Part of the Ministers of this Church have read the said Act in one Shape or another. Therefore, since a judicial Testimony against publick Sins and Steps of Defection cannot be obtained from the present Judicatories, it is necessary that such Ministers who are grieved with their Proceedings, and who desire to discharge the Duties of their Ministerial Office, should come out from among them, and associate together in distinct Judicatories, that they may, according to the Power and Authority which they have received from the Lord Jesus, condemn particularly our publick Sins and Backslidings from the Lord, and that they may humble themselves for these before him; and also, that they may call all Ranks of Persons in the Land to Repentance and Humiliation for the Iniquities of the present Generation,

tion, and for the Sins of our Fathers, conform to Scripture Pattern and Example, *Psal. cvi. Psal. lxxviii.* 3dly, It is the Duty of the Ministers of the Gospel to feed the Church of God which he hath purchased with his own Blood, and to commit the Ministerial Trust to faithful Men, according to the Lord's express Command in his own Word, *Acts xx. 28. John xxi. 15, 16. 2 Tim. ii. 2.* But such is the Conduct of the present Judicatories, and such is the State and Situation of many Congregations in *Scotland* at this Day, that they cannot have faithful Ministers set over them, unless such as are grieved with the present Proceedings of the Judicatories associate together in a distinct Capacity from them, in order to the Relief of such Congregations as are groining under the Weight of violent Settlements. I hope the Author of the *Essay* will not refuse that this is the State and Condition of many Congregations in *Scotland*; the Judicatories have obtruded Ministers upon them, they are thereby scattered and broken, and want the Food of their Souls: They must therefore either submit to the Ministry of Intruders, and acknowledge their Pastoral Authority over them, or be destitute of Gospel-ministers, unto whose Pastoral Care and Inspection they can warrantably submit; but the former they cannot do, without betraying their Principles and wounding their Consciences: Therefore, unless they have Ministers appointed over them according to the Divine Rule and Institution, they must remain like Sheep without a Shepherd. But, how shall they obtain such Ministers? If the smaller Part in the Judicatories, who are grieved and affected with the above violent Settlements, continue still in their Conjunction with them, they cannot relieve the oppressed Flock and Heritage of God, as I have already observed: And I add, That thereby they involve themselves in personal Guilt; in regard that, by this Means, they not only refuse Obedience to the above positive and express Command of the Head of the Church, but also become accessory unto the continued Miseries and Bondage under which many of the Lord's People do labour and groine through the Land; they have a Hand, either in the Perishing or Starving of many Souls, through a Famine of the Word of the Lord. Wherefore it is necessary, that such Ministers, tho' few in Number, who pity the grieved and oppressed Heritage of God, should associate together, that they may appoint Ministers over them according to the Divine Pattern

and Rule: To this they are obliged by their Office, as also by the above-mentioned and other positive and express Commands; which are likewise their Warrant for Associations of this Nature. From all the above, and the like Considerations, it is plain, that, when the Judicatories of a particular visible Church do obstinately carry on a Course of Defection, the minor Part, tho' few in Number, have Right on their Side, and are fully warranted from the Word of the Lord, to associate together for the Exercise of the Keys of Government and Discipline, that they may fulfil that Ministry which they have received in all its Parts and Branches, and that they may discharge these Duties towards the Church of Christ, that the State of the Church, their Office, and the positive Commands of the Head of the Church, do all oblige them unto: And particularly, that in a Day and Time when Error prevails, and Sin abounds, they may testify judicially against Error and Sin, and display a Banner for Truth; as also, that, in a Day and Time when the Heritage of God are oppressed and scattered, they may use proper Endeavours for appointing Ministers over them, unto whose Pastoral Inspection they may warrantably commit themselves, under the Leading and Direction of the chief Shepherd of the Sheep, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The only Exception that is brought against the above Argument, as I have laid it, is, That Ministers may fully discharge their Duty, and exoner themselves, by Dissents or Protestations against the bad Acts and wrong Decisions of the Judicatories. I have already observed in the Introduction, that Protestations of this Kind, against the supreme Judicatory, stand judicially condemned by the General Assembly 1733. But tho' Protestations may in some particular Instances be sufficient Means of Exoneration, when they are allowed, together with their Reasons, to be marked in the Records of the Court; yet I humbly judge, that Dissents and Protestations cannot in every Case be reckoned a sufficient Testimony for Truth; and particularly, that they cannot, in the present Situation of the Judicatories, be reckoned a sufficient Discharge of the Duty that is incumbent on the Office-bearers of the Church, who desire to be found faithful to the Lord in this Day of Declining and Backsliding, and that for the following Reasons; 1st, A continuing in Communion with the Judicatories of a backsliding Church, under the Cover of such Dissents and Protestations, opens a Door for a

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corrupt Mixture in the House of God: At this Rate, *Arians, Socinians, Arminians* and *Calvinists* may sit down together as Members of the same Ecclesiastical Body; and I know not but the right Hand of Fellowship may after the same Manner be given to *Deists*, who run down revealed Religion, if they can conform themselves to the Religion that has the legal Countenance in the Society wherein they live. And if we consider the Management of the present Judicatories, in the many important doctrinal Errors that have been brought to their Bar, which I have already examined; however some may please themselves with what they call Testimonies in Judicatories, yet, while no joint and judicial Testimony is given to Truth, the Lord Jesus and his Truths are not confessed by that Ecclesiastick Body: And therefore I say, However some may please themselves with such Testimonies, yet they have Ground to fear that the Covering will be found narrower than that they can wrap themselves in it, and the Bed shorter than that they can stretch themselves upon it. *2dly*, Tho' a Dissent or Protestation, with the Reasons thereof, should be recorded in the supreme Judicatory, when Truth lies wounded and bleeding in our Streets; yet this is not a faithful Discharge of the Trust committed unto Ministers, it is not a fulfilling of their Ministry, it is not a doing the whole of what their Office obliges them unto, and what they have a Right and Warrant to do; in regard a judicial Testimony to Truth is still wanting. A Protestation in the Court may be the Deed of some few in the Court, testifying against the Proceedings of the Court as wrong, and giving their Reasons why they judge so; but yet, in the mean Time, they give up with the Government and Discipline unto such as are suppressing and bearing down the Truth, or who are protecting and screening the Erroneous from Censure, and thereby supporting and countenancing Error. I have elsewhere * shown that in this Case a Protestation or Dissent bears no Proportion at all unto the Injury that is done to Truth, and therefore shall not here insist upon it: I shall only add, That as the Support and Maintenance of Divine Truth is one of the great Ends and Designs of the Institution of Ecclesiastical Courts in the Church of Christ, so, if the Church-representative makes not a publick and judicial Confession and Acknowledgment of the Truth, in Opposition unto the Errors that are vented unto the Prejudice and Subversion of the same, she refuses

* Letter p. 6, 13.

ses to give the Redeemer that Revenue of Glory, Honour
 and Praise that ought to be given him before a wicked and
 perverse Generation, *Matth. x. 32, 33. Mark viii. 38.* 3dly,
 Tho' the supreme Judicatory should record a Dissent or
 Protestation, with the Reasons thereof, against the Intrusion
 of Ministers upon dissenting and reclaiming Congregations ;
 yet it is obvious and plain, that there is no Relief given
 thereby unto such as are labouring under the Load and
 and Weight of such grievous Oppression and Tyranny :
 Notwithstanding of such Dissents and Protestations, they
 must want the Pastoral Inspection of faithful and sent Mi-
 nisters, unless such as protest do associate in distinct Judi-
 catories for their Help and Relief. However some of our
 Reverend Brethren may please themselves with such Pro-
 testations, yet they leave the Flock of Christ under intru-
 ded Hirelings ; they do not what is their Duty to do, and
 what the chief Shepherd of the Sheep commands them to
 do, while they take not the proper and necessary Steps, to
 appoint over oppressed and destitute Congregations, Mini-
 sters according to the Divine Rule and Institution : Nei-
 ther can they take the necessary Steps for the same, unless
 they declare a Secession from the present Judicatories,
 and associate together, that they may commit the Minister-
 ial Trust to faithful Men. From what I have observed,
 I hope it is evident, that such as continue in the present
 Judicatories, even tho' they witness by Reasonings, Dissents
 or Protestations against their sinful Proceedings, are invol-
 ved in the Omission of such Duties as the Head of the
 Church has enjoined them, and which their Office does
 oblige them unto ; and consequently, that Union and Con-
 junction with the present Judicatories, in the present Si-
 uation and State of Matters in this National Church,
 is upon sinful and unwarrantable Terms : As also, it may
 be evident from the Grant of the Keys to the Office-bear-
 ers of the House of God by the Lord Jesus the Head of
 the Church, and from the peremptory Instructions that are
 given to Ministers of the Gospel to reach all Things what-
 soever Christ hath commanded, to fulfil their Ministry, to
 feed Christ's Sheep and Lambs ; that, when the Judicato-
 ries of a Church carry on a Course of Defection from the
 Lord, as in the particular Instances I have given concer-
 ning the Judicatories of this National Church, then, and
 in this Case, such Ministers as desire to be found faith-
 ful, tho' they should be few in Number, have Divine
 Right and Warrant to leave the backsliding Part, and to

associate together, that they may in a judicial Capacity bear Testimony to the Truth, and vindicate the Liberties of the Flock of Christ; and consequently, that the associate Presbytery have Divine Right and Warrant for their present Practice, in emitting a judicial Testimony for Truth, and in using their Endeavours for the Relief of the Lord's oppressed Heritage through the Land.

3dly, I may likewise prove the Divine Right and Warrant that is pled for, from that solemn Charge given to the Church of *Galatia*, Gal. v. 1. *Stand fast therefore in the Liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free, and be not intangled again with the Yoke of Bondage.* The Spirit of God, by the Apostle in this Epistle, warns the Churches of *Galatia* against erroneous and seducing Teachers, who perverted the Gospel of Christ, Chap. i. 7. and exhorts them to stand fast in their Christian Liberties, that is, in the Faith, Profession and Practice of the Truths of the Gospel, in Opposition to the Doctrines and Principles of these corrupt Teachers, which had a native Tendency to bring them under spiritual Thralldom and Bondage. The Charge, to *stand fast* in their Liberties, is given to every individual Member of these Churches, according to the Place that every one had in the organick Body; and they are all hereby commanded to keep themselves pure and free from the Bondage of Error. The Office-bearers of that Church are likewise hereby enjoined to discharge the Duty incumbent upon them in their Station, for maintaining their Christian Liberty and Freedom; as is evident from the 12. v. *I would (says he) that they were even cut off which trouble you.* As it is the Leaven of Error, v. 9 which the Apostle warns them against; so this Leaven is purged out of the Church by Ecclesiastick Procets and Discipline, particularly when such as trouble the Church with this Leaven are either reformed by the Discipline of the Lord's House, or else cut off from the Church by this spiritual Sword: And this belongs only to the Office-bearers of the Church; it is their Province, not only doctrinally to guard the Church against Error, but also judicially to condemn and censure the same. And as the Apostle does in the plainest Terms declare unto the Office-bearers of that Church their Duty, in the 12. v. so, in the 9. v. a weighty Reason is given, *A little Leaven leaveneth the whole Lump.* Tho' the Churches of *Galatia* are mentioned in the plural Number, Gal. i. 2. yet in this Verse they are called *one Lump*, being one Ecclesiastick or Organic

nick Body ; and hereby the Apostle declares likewise in the plainest Terms, that, if Error was not condemned and censured, the whole Body would be held and repute as leavened. As the Duty of the Office-bearers of the Church of *Galatia*, and consequently of all other Office-bearers when the Church is in the like Circumstances, is clearly pointed out by the Spirit of God in the above Words ; so, if we shall make the following Supposition, that the Majority of the Office-bearers in that Church refused to condemn Error, or to censure the Erroneous ; and that, in their Ecclesiastical Capacity, they spoiled the several particular Churches of any of the valuable Liberties wherewith Christ had made them free ; and that, instead of yielding Obedience unto the Commands of the Head of the Church, they justified themselves in their Disobedience to the same ; I say, when the Case is thus stated, let every unprejudiced Person judge what the lesser Part of the Office-bearers of that Church, tho' few in Number, who were grieved with the Disobedience of the greater Part, ought to have done in Obedience to the fore-said Commands. Could the Disobedience of the greater Part absolve them from the Discharge of these Duties positively and expressly enjoined the several Office-bearers of the Church of *Galatia* ? Or, because the Judicatories of *Galatia* would not stand fast in the Liberties wherewith Christ made them free, and because they would not condemn Error or censure the Erroneous, were the few that were grieved with their Proceeding, and who might easily see that the Management of the said Judicatories had an evident Tendency to the Ruin of that Church ; were they, I say, thereby bound up from exercising the Keys of Government and Discipline, or from supporting and maintaining Truth judicially, and asserting the Liberties and Freedom of the Disciples of Christ ? Or, were the Minority thereby bound to continue in Ecclesiastical Communion with the greater Part who refused to discharge their Duty, when the Spirit of God declares, that, if the Leaven of Error was not purged out, the *whole Lump*, that is, the whole Ecclesiastick Body, was thereby leavened ? Tho' the Author of the *Essay*, p. 42. and frequently through his Book, pleads against Secession from the present Judicatories, from the State of the Churches of *Galatia*, and the other Churches erected by the Apostles ; yet it appears to me very plain, that, if we duly consider the Commands and Injunctions given to the Office-bearers of

the Churches, in the several Epistles that were writ them, and particularly these that are given to the Church of *Galatia*, we shall see their Duty clearly pointed out unto them. The above Command, to stand fast in their Christian Liberties, is given to all the Office-bearers and Members of the Church of *Galatia*; and Obedience is required from them unto it, according to their different Spheres and Stations: Consequently, if the Majority of the Office-bearers proved disobedient to the Divine Command, the smaller Part, tho' few in Number, who desired to adhere to their Christian Liberties, were obliged to give Obedience unto it, and had sufficient Right and Warrant for the Discharge of their Duty, in a distinct Capacity from the backsliding Part of the said Church. If the Author of the *Essay* would manage the Argument to purpose against the Conduct of the Associate Presbytery, he must prove, that, when the major Part of the Office-bearers of a Church refuse Obedience to such positive Divine Commands as are above expressed, that the Unfaithfulness of the Majority binds up the lesser Part, who are sensible of their Duty, from the faithful Discharge of the same: Or, which is to the same Purpose, he must prove, that when the Judicatories of a Church in their judicative Capacity, instead of maintaining and supporting the Truth, refuse to condemn dangerous Errors when brought to their Bar; and when, instead of vindicating and asserting the Liberties and Freedom of the Members of the Church, they wreath a Yoke of Bondage about their Necks (which I have already proven is the Case with the present Judicatories) that, notwithstanding of this, the smaller Part, who are sensible of their Duty, ought to remain in Communion and Conjunction with them, and that they ought not to associate by themselves, to assert the Liberties wherewith Christ has made his People free, and to maintain a Testimony for the Truth in Opposition to Error; tho' Office-bearers are given to the Church, and Ecclesiastical Courts are instituted and appointed, for these and the like valuable Ends and Purposes. Or, to express it in few Words, the Author of the *Essay*, under the Pain of losing all his Specious Arguments from the Churches of *Galatia* and *Corinth*, must prove the following Proposition, viz. *That, when the Majority of an Ecclesiastick Body continue to disobey the express Commands of the Head of the Church, the Minority are thereby well warranted to disobey the said Commands, for the Sake of Peace, and to main-*

tain Union with the Majority. But this I judge he will not be able to reconcile to the Scriptures of Truth, nor will it agree with his own declared Principle, *Essay* p. 36. That we are not to keep up Union with a Church at the Expence of the least Sin.

I might in like Manner prove the Divine Right and Warrant that is pled for, from the Reproofs and Admonitions, from the Commands and Directions, that are given in the several Apostolick Epistles to the Churches to whom they are directed : But I shall not further insist upon this ; I refer the Reader to the printed Letter, for what I have observed upon the Cases of the Churches of *Thyatira* and *Pergamos*, and on the Reproofs and Directions that are given them. I hope, from what is now said, it may be evident, that, when the Conduct of the present Judicatories of this National Church is seriously considered, the Associate Presbytery have Divine Right and Warrant for the Steps that they have taken ; and particularly, for their emitting a judicial Act and Testimony to the Doctrine, Worship, Government and Discipline of our Lord's House, and against the several Defections both of present and former Times from the same. I shall only here subjoin the Words of the Apostle, *Col. ii. 2.* *That their Hearts might be comforted, being knit together in Love—to the Acknowledgment of the Mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ.* From these Words I observe, That there can be no true Fellowship without Love ; and Church-members, whether Office-bearers or others, cannot be *knit together in Love* where Offence is daily given, and the Matter and Ground of Offence is obstinately persisted in and justified, notwithstanding of the most dutiful Representations against the same. I further observe, That the Members of the Church ought to be *knit together, to the Acknowledgment of the Mystery of God.* How then can we have Ecclesiastical Union and Conjunction with Judicatories, that refuse to acknowledge and confess many great and important Truths, in Opposition unto the many pernicious Errors by which they are subverted ?

4thly, When the Conduct of the present Judicatories is considered, the laudable Acts and Constitutions of this Church warrant our Secession from them, and our Association together for displaying the Banner of a judicial Testimony for Truth. The Duties pointed out unto us, from the Acts and Constitutions of this reformed Church, are summed

summed up in our Covenants, National and Solemn League. In the National Covenant, we swear that we "shall continue in the Obedience of the Doctrine and Discipline of this Kirk, and shall defend the same, according to our Vocation and Power, all the Days of our Lives." And in the Bond subjoined, *Anno* 1638, whereby the Covenant was sworn with Accommodation to their then Circumstances, we swear, that we shall "continue in the Profession and Obedience of the foresaid Religion, and that we shall defend the same, and resist all these contrary Errors and Corruptions, according to our Vocation, and to the utmost of that Power that God hath put into our Hands, all the Days of our Life." Also, in the first Article of our Solemn League, we swear, "That we shall sincerely, really and constantly, through the Grace of God, endeavour, in our several Places and Callings, the Preservation of the reformed Religion in the Church of *Scotland*, in Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government, against our common Enemies." And in the 6th Article we swear, "That we shall not suffer ourselves, directly nor indirectly, to be divided and withdrawn" from our Covenant Union and Conjunction, "either by making Defection to the contrary Part, or by giving ourselves to a detestable Indifferency and Neutrality in this Cause." Can we, in a Consistency with our Covenant Union and Conjunction, maintain a Conjunction with the present Judicatories, who are carrying on a Course of Defection to the contrary Part? Can we, without giving up ourselves to a detestable Indifferency and Neutrality in the Cause of God, see Error lifting up its Head without any suitable Testimony against it? And, can we see the Heritage of God scattered and broken, without using our Endeavours for affording Relief to the Lord's oppressed People? Do we, in our Places and Callings, preserve our reformed Doctrine, Government and Discipline? Do we defend the same against all contrary Errors and Corruptions, according to our Vocations, and the utmost of that Power that God hath put into our Hands, if we shall be Witnesses to the Injury that is done to Truth, if we shall see any of the Rights of the Redeemer's spiritual Kingdom invaded, and his Subjects spoiled of their Rights and Privileges, and yet in the mean Time shall not use that Power which is put into our Hands, and which we have a Right to use according to our several Places and Callings, namely, of lifting up a judicial Testi-

Testimony for Truth, and for the Rights and Privileges of the Subjects of the Redeemer's Kingdom? And therefore I humbly judge that we have Right and Warrant to associate together in distinct Judicatories from the present, who are carrying on a Course of Defection, that we may thereby endeavour, not only to answer the End and Design of the Institution of Ecclesiastical Courts in the New-Testament Church, but that we may also do what in us lies to prosecute the Ends of our solemn Covenant-engagements.

5thly, All the Ministers of this Church, when they are ordained to the Office of the holy Ministry, solemnly promise and engage, "That they shall firmly and closely adhere to the Doctrine contained in our Confession of Faith; — and likewise, That they shall to the utmost of their Power, in their Station, assert, maintain and defend the said Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government, &c." But the present Judicatories, as has been made evident, refuse to assert, maintain and defend the Doctrines contained in our Confession of Faith, in Opposition unto many Errors subversive of the same, that have been brought to their Bar; and, instead of maintaining and defending our Presbyterian Government and Discipline, they pursue such Measures as have an evident Tendency to overthrow the same, as has likewise been made evident in several particular Instances: Therefore, such who are sensible of their Duty as Office-bearers of the Church, and of the solemn Engagements they have come under, that they shall to the *utmost of their Power*, in their Station, *assert, maintain and defend* the Doctrine contained in our Confession of Faith, &c. have Right and Warrant, from the Acts and Constitutions of this Church, to associate together for the Exercise of the Keys of Government and Discipline, that they may *assert and maintain*, in a *judicial* Capacity, the Doctrine contained in our Confession of Faith, and our Presbyterian Church-government and Discipline; and consequently the Associate Presbytery, in their judicial *Act and Testimony*, and in their several Proceedings thereupon, are endeavouring to pay their Vows unto the Lord, and to fulfil the Engagements that they came under, when they were ordained to the Office of the holy Ministry. I shall only further observe upon this Head, That all the Ministers of this Church do solemnly engage themselves, and also sign it with their Hand, *That they shall never endeavour, directly*

nor indirectly, the Prejudice or Subversion of the foresaid Doctrine, Worship, Government and Discipline. I submit it to the Judgment of such as are not quite prejudiced, if the present Judicatories are fulfilling this solemn Engagement; or rather, if the whole of their Management, with respect to the doctrinal Errors that have been brought to their Bar, is not directly to the Prejudice of the Doctrines contained in our excellent Confession of Faith; as likewise, if their Conduct, with respect to the many Instances I have given of Tyranny in the Administration, is not directly to the Prejudice of our Presbyterian Church-government and Discipline; and consequently, if they are not guilty of the Violation of the foresaid solemn Engagements that they have come under, when ordained to the Office of the holy Ministry. When all these Things are impartially considered, they are sufficient to justify the Conduct of the Associate Presbytery, and to evidence that they have Right and Warrant, from the laudable Acts and Constitutions of the Church of *Scotland*, to depart from Ecclesiastical Communion and Conjunction with the present Judicatories, and to associate together, for asserting judicially the Truths that are opposed and subverted, and for endeavouring in the said Capacity the Relief of the broken and oppressed Heritage of God through the Land.

6thly, The Bond of our Ecclesiastical Union and Conjunction with the present Judicatories of this National Church is broke, by the sinful and unwarrantable Proceedings of the said Judicatories: Therefore, such who desire to hold fast that Reformation-purity, once attained unto, ought not only to depart from Communion with them, until they return to their Duty; but they have also Right on their Side to associate together for the Exercise of the Keys of Government and Discipline, in a distinct Capacity from them. I have already observed, that all Ecclesiastical Union and Conjunction, in any particular visible Church, is under certain Conditions and Limitations; the Members of the organick Body are joined together by some special Ligaments and Bonds: It is true, that the Profession and Acknowledgment of the Truth, as it is contained in the holy Scriptures, the only unerring Rule of Faith and Practice, deserves to be reckoned the primary Ligament and Bond of all such Union and Conjunction, *Isa. viii. 20. Gal. vi. 16. 2 Pet. i. 19.* but the secondary Ligaments or Bonds of Ecclesiastical Union and

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Conjunction are the subordinate Standards of Doctrine, Worship, Government and Discipline, which are received and adopted by any particular Church, as agreeable to and founded upon the holy Scripture; and the present State and Circumstances of the Church make these subordinate Standards more and more necessary, in order to knit together the Members of the organick Body. Such is the Blindness and Wickedness of Men, that they wrest the holy Scriptures to their own Destruction; such is the cunning Craftiness of Men, whereby they ly in wait to deceive, that they father their Lies upon the holy Scripture; they even pretend Scripture-authority for their gross and pernicious Errors: Hence, Confessions of Faith are necessary and suitable Means of acknowledging and confessing the Truth, in Opposition unto the Sleight of Men, who subvert the same; they are likewise necessary to evidence that we receive and hold the holy Scriptures in their genuine Sense and Meaning, in Opposition to the perverse Wrestings of the same by Men of unstable and corrupt Minds. And as the Reverend Mr. *Masterton* observes, in his *Apology* for the Presbyterians in the North of Ireland, p. 17. in Answer to a common Objection against *Confessions of Faith*, " By Scripture-precepts and Pre-
 " dents, dangerous Errors ought to be explicitly declared
 " against; our Saviour expressly apprised his Hearers of
 " the Errors of the Scribes and Pharisees; the Apostle
 " *Paul* expressly mentions the Errors of *Hymeneus* and
 " *Philetus*, 2 Tim. ii. 17. *whose Word doth eat as a Canker*,
 " v. 18. *Who concerning the Faith have erred, saying that*
 " *the Resurrection is past already; and overthrow the Faith*
 " *of some.* The great Apostle judged it necessary to be
 " as express in opposing these Errors, as the Abettors of
 " them were bold and express in affirming them: And, in
 " Conformity to these Scripture-examples, the Confessions
 " of the reformed Churches consist very much of open
 " and express Declarations against the Errors which in-
 " fested the Church, especially in these Times when such
 " Confessions were imposed." In like Manner, thro' the
 Subtilty of *Satan*, and the Wickedness of Men, that Order
 and Government which Christ has appointed in his House
 has been subverted in the Christian Church, and the Or-
 dinances of Worship have likewise been changed and cor-
 rupted: Hence it is necessary for a particular visible
 Church, that would approve herself unto the Head, to
 have the Order and Government of the House of God laid

down according to the Pattern shown in the Mount; and to have such a Directory for the publick Worship of God, to which the Members of the Church may warrantably conform themselves, if they would maintain Union and Communion together, as Members of the same Ecclesiastick or Organick Body, to the Honour of God, and the Praise and Glory of their exalted Redeemer.

That I may apply what is above advanced to the State and Condition of this National Church as she is represented in her present Judicatories; I hope it will not be refused by such as own themselves to be Presbyterians, that the outward Bonds and Ligaments of the Members of this National Church amongst themselves, and particularly of the Union and Conjunction of the Office-bearers of the Church in all her Judicatories, are, the Doctrine, Worship, Government and Discipline of the Lord's House, as the same are held forth from the holy Scriptures, in our Confession of Faith, Books of Discipline, Form of Presbyterian Church-government, and Directory for Worship. All Ranks of Persons in this Land are solemnly bound and obliged to abide in the Faith, Profession and Obedience of the said Doctrine, Worship, &c. by the National Covenant of *Scotland*, and by the Solemn League and Covenant of the three Nations; and all the Ministers of this Church, when ordained to the Office of the Ministry, do promise and engage, as I have already observed, that they shall firmly and closely adhere to the Doctrine contained in our Confession of Faith, to the Purity of Worship practised in this Church, and to our Presbyterian Government and Discipline; and that in their Station, and to the utmost of their Power, they shall assert, maintain and defend the said Doctrine, Worship, Government and Discipline; and that they shall never endeavour directly nor indirectly the Prejudice or Subversion of the same. But I have already proven, that these Bonds of our Ecclesiastical Unity are broke by the present Judicatories, in regard the Erroneous have pled at their Bar, that their perverse Schemes were agreeable to the Doctrines contained in our Confession of Faith; and yet the Edge of Divine Truth, as it is laid down from the Word of God in our Confession of Faith, has not been directed against the new and different Shapes under which the old *Arian*, *Arminian* and other Errors have appeared: Wherefore the Judicatories of this Church are justly chargeable with letting slip the Truths that they have received,

ceived, contrary to *Heb. ii. 1.* And, by their above Conduct and Management, Truth has been left naked without a judicial Testimony unto it, in direct Opposition unto the Errors subverting the same; whereby our excellent Confession of Faith cannot any more be reckoned, in the present Situation of this National Church, a fixed Standard of Soundness in the Faith, at least with respect unto these important Truths that have been either directly or indirectly opposed and subverted by the several pernicious Schemes that have been brought to the Bar of Assemblies. In like Manner, the Bond of our Ecclesiastical Unity, as it respects the Order, Government and Discipline of the Lord's House, is broke by the present Judicatories; in regard our Presbyterian Frame and Constitution is unhinged in the many particular Instances which I have given of Tyranny in the Administration: Therefore I conclude, that such who are grieved with the Conduct and Management of the Judicatories, and who are sensible of their Duty, have Right on their Side, from the Principles and Constitution of the Presbyterian or Covenanted Church of *Scotland*, to associate together for the Exercise of the Keys of Government and Discipline, that they may, in a judicative Capacity, acknowledge, confess and assert the Truths held forth from the Word of God in our Confession of Faith; as also that they may, in the same Capacity, assert, maintain and defend our Presbyterian Principles and Constitution.

S E C T. VI.

Wherein the Conduct of the Judicatories is considered, since the Time that the Secession from them was first stated and declared; and particularly, the Conduct of Ministers and Judicatories with respect unto the late Act of Parliament anent Captain John Porteous; as also the Act of Assembly 1738, against the seceding Ministers, are enquired into.

I Have, in the preceeding Sections, laid the Argument for Secession from the present Judicatories, mainly, in the Shape in which the Secession was stated, when four Ministers were thrust out from Communion with

them *Anno* 1733, in consequence of an Act and Sentence of the preceeding Assembly past against the said Ministers. But, tho' a Secession was stated at that Time upon very just and weighty Grounds, yet it is to be regreted that the Judicatories of this National Church are so far from shewing a Disposition for removing the Grounds of Secession, that by their Procedure from Time to Time they increase or strengthen the same; and, instead of affording to the seceding Brethren the agreeable Hopes of Union and Conjunction with them in the Lord, the Procedure of the Judicatories is such, as gives them more and more Reason and Ground, not only for continuing in their Secession, but even for enlarging and extending the same further than it was stated before the Commission of the General Assembly in the foresaid Year 1733. There are some Things advanced by the Author of the *Essay*, p. 5. wherewith he thinks to twit the seceding Brethren; as for Instance, that our Reverend Brother Mr. *Erskine*, in his Answers to the Remarks of the Synod of *Perth* and *Stirling* on his Sermon, *October* 12. 1732, says, "I know that there
 " is a great Body of faithful Ministers in the Church of
 " *Scotland*, with whom I do not reckon myself worthy to
 " be compared." And downward in the same Answers,
 " I know that a vast many of them have God's Call and
 " the Church's Call." Hence our Author concludes,
 " If there be a Body and a great Body, many and a vast
 " many in the Church of *Scotland*, of faithful Ministers,
 " having God's Call to the Work of the Gospel, I think
 " she is a true Church of Christ; and who (*says he*) can
 " but own her for such?" I shall not insist upon the
 Terms, *true Church*, so frequent with our Author; I have
 said what I judge sufficient upon them: But I must here
 observe, that our Author's above Conclusion, in which he
 seems to boast, does not at all follow from any of his Pre-
 mises; and my Reason for this Observation is, That tho' there
 should be many, yea, a vast many Ministers in a
 Church, having the Lord's Call to the Work of the
 Gospel; yet, if the Majority in the Judicatories are
 carrying on a Course of Defection, the Majority are
 still the Court, and therefore the Majority are the
 Church-representative. I have already proven, that this
 National Church, as she is represented in her present
 Judicatories, is carrying on a Course of Defection from
 her Reformation-principles; and I am about to confirm and
 illustrate the Argument in this Section.

What

What then, tho' there should be many that have had the Lord's Call and the Church's Call to the Work of the Ministry, who yet continue in Connexion and Conjunction with the present Judicatories? It does not therefore follow that this National Church, as she is represented in them, is a true Church according to the obvious Sense and Meaning (as above explained) of the 18th Article of our first Confession of Faith: Therefore our Author's Argument may very well be turned against himself in the following Manner; If it is so, as I have already proven, that the Judicatories of this Church are carrying on a Course of Defection from our Reformation-purity, and refuse to be reclaimed, then it is the Duty of such Ministers who profess to be grieved with their Proceedings, to come out from among them, and to bear Testimony against a Course of Defection in a way of Secession from them, that they may exert themselves in their Station, and according to their Power and Ability, for asserting, maintaining and defending the Doctrine, Worship, Government and Discipline of the House of God, in this Day of Treading-down in our Valley of Vision: For, as there are Degrees of Faithfulness, so these worthy Ministers would be more faithful to the Head of the Church, and to the Commission they have received from him, as also to the Souls of the present and rising Generations, if they would depart from Communion with the present Judicatories, who pour Contempt upon their Representations and Petitions, and where they are often born down with Banter and Scorn, when they make any Thing like an honest Appearance against the sinful Steps that are taken, and if they would associate together for the faithful Discharge of their Duty, in the Exercise of the Keys of Government and Discipline, for the Ends and Purposes for which they are given them by the exalted Head of the Church. If one Heart and Soul were given to such Ministers, who profess to be grieved with the present Course of Backsliding from the Lord, to exert themselves after this Manner, it would be a promising Token for Good, in these Days wherein we have seen Evil; it would be a Door of Hope unto this sinning, broken and sinking Church; and might, thro' the Blessing of the Lord, stagger the Counsels and Projects of such as are carrying on a Course of Defection.

There is another Thing advanced by the Author of the *Essay*, p. 5, 6. viz. That Mr. *Erskine* in his Protestation against the Sentence of the Assembly *Anno* 1733, to which
the

the other three Ministers adhered, declares, "That he had
 " a very great and dutiful Regard to the Judicatories of
 " this Church, to whom (*says he*) I owe my Subjection in
 " the Lord." He adds, That the Brethren in their Representation given in to the Commission of the Assembly 1733, "when speaking of their Protestation taken against
 " the Commission that Year," (he should have said, against the Assembly that Year) "they say, Our Protestation is so far from impugning the just Power and Authority of the supreme Judicatories of this Church, that it
 " plainly acknowledges the same." From the above Expressions our Author argues, "Now, if a true Church, whose
 " Authority in her supreme Judicatories in 1733 was to
 " be acknowledged and regarded with a very great Regard
 " as just, I hope she is not vastly worse since that Time;
 " for some Stop hath been put to what was then the chief
 " Ground of Complaint, *viz.* violent Intrusions." I have already observed, that it is not Matter of Fact that violent Intrusions were the chief Ground of Complaint: There are two other Things advanced by our Author in his two last Lines above-cited; the one is, when he tells us, That he hopes that this Church is not *vastly worse* since the fore-said Time; and the other is, the Ground he gives us for this his Hope, wherein, after his ordinary Way, he extenuates our publick Sins, by insinuating in his smooth Manner that this Church is somewhat amended: "For,
 " *says he*, some Stop hath been put——to violent Intrusions." But, as this is the Ground of our Author's Hope, I humbly judge it will be found as weak as his Superstructure is imaginary. I might here observe, that the above Protestation mentioned by our Author was entred, while we were contending in a way of Church-communion with the Judicatories, before the Secession was declared and stated, and consequently while we were using the ordinary Means of dealing with them for their Repentance and Reformation; of this I have given some short Account already in the Introduction, and therefore shall not now insist upon it. What I here intend is, to shew that the present Judicatories of this National Church are worse, or, to use our Author's own Words, they are *vastly worse*, since the above Protestation was entred against the Act and Sentence of the Assembly 1733. And, for the Proof of this, I offer the following particular Instances of their Procedure and Conduct.

1st, After the entring of the above Protestation, the
 fore-

foresaid Assembly pass'd an Act and Sentence against the protesting Ministers, appointing their Commission to suspend them in case they should not retract their Protestation, and to lay them under an higher Censure if they should not submit to the Sentence of Suspension: This was a Step vastly worse than any Step the Judicatories had yet taken, when it is considered, that, by the said Act and Sentence, new and unwarrantable Terms of Ministerial Communion were imposed, as I have already observed. Our Author could not but very well know that this Sentence was posterior to the Protestation; and as he never professes to justify, but rather seems to condemn the above Sentence, so he cannot refuse that the Judicatories may be at least somewhat worse: And, if he had understood the present Question and Argument, he might have known that the Point upon which the Secession was at first stated, was the above-mentioned Act and Deed of the Assembly, whereby Ministers were deprived of their Freedom and Liberty of testifying doctrinally from the Pulpit, and by Protestation in the supreme Judicatory, against a Course of Defection. If notwithstanding of this Sentence of the Assembly, posterior to the entering of the Protestation, our Author does not reckon the Judicatories vastly worse, yet I doubt if he shall find a Parallel unto this extraordinary Sentence, since our Reformation from Popery, whereby four Ministers were thrust out from Communion with the Judicatories, on account of a Protestation for their just and necessary Exoneration.

2dly, The above arbitrary Sentence was execute in a very arbitrary Manner by the Commission of the foresaid Assembly: They refused to consider what the protesting Ministers had to offer for their just and necessary Vindication, they refused the Representation above-mentioned a Reading; the said Ministers behoved to retract their Protestation, otherwise nothing could satisfy the Commission, or save them from Censure. As the arbitrary Execution of the above extraordinary Sentence was a Step vastly worse than any Thing the Judicatories had formerly done, so the Proceedings of that Commission were neither disapproved nor condemned by the subsequent Assembly, but held and reputed to be formal and legal Deeds, as I have already shown from the Act of the said Assembly with Reference to the seceding Ministers.

3dly, Tho' the Author alledges, p. 6. That some Stop hath been put to what he calls the chief Ground of Complaint,

plaint, viz. *violent Intrusions*; and, *Essay* p. 30. he tells us,
 That a *considerable Stop* hath been put to them for some
 Time bygone: Yet the present Judicatories are worse even
 in the Affair of *violent Intrusions* than formerly; every
 one of our Assemblies since the Year 1734 have either
 authorised, supported or countenanced such violent Set-
 tlements, either upon the Footing of the repealed Act
 1732, or upon the Footing of the Patronage-act: As for
 Instance, the Assembly 1735 appointed a Call to be mo-
 derated for the Presentee to the Parish of *Carridden*, and
 they refer the Case of the Inrolment of the Intruders into
 the Parish of *Muckhart* and *Troquire* unto the respective
 Synods; as this was a plain Authorising of the Synods to
 inrol these Intruders, so the Remit to the Synod of *Perth*
 bears an Appointment unto them to continue their Endeavours
 to obtain Harmony in that Corner. The obvious
 Meaning of this Appointment is, that they should use their
 Endeavours to bring the People in *Muckhart* to submit to
 the Ministry of an Intruder. The Assembly 1736 ap-
 point the Presbytery of *Stirling* to proceed to a violent
 Settlement in the Parish of *Denny*, and at the same Time
 expressly injoin the said Presbytery to be at Pains to bring
 the People of the said Parish to submit to the Decisions of
 the Church, and to the Ministry of the intruded Presentee.
 The same Assembly appoint the Presbytery of *Dumfriesshire*,
 and Synod, to inrol the Intruder into the Parish of *Tro-
 quire* as a Member of their respective Judicatories, and
 to support him in his Ministry, and to endeavour to bring
 the People in that Parish to submit to it. Again, the As-
 sembly *Anno* 1737 “ declare their Dissatisfaction with the
 “ Conduct of the Presbytery of *Stirling*, in neglecting or
 “ refusing to obey the Appointment of the Assembly 1736
 “ with respect to the Settlement of Mr. *James Stirling*, the
 “ Presentee to the Parish of *Denny*: And they appoint the
 “ said Presbytery to proceed to the Trials and Settlement
 “ of the Presentee to the said Parish, and to finish the
 “ same before the first of *September* that Year; and, in
 “ case he is not actually settled before that Time, the
 “ Synod of *Perth* and *Stirling* are appointed at their *Octo-
 ber* Meeting to proceed to his Trials, and to finish his
 “ Settlement before the Month of *March* ensuing: And it
 “ is expressly declared, that it shall not be lawful for the
 “ Synod to put any Question, whether they shall obey
 “ this Appointment; but that any Ten or mo Ministers
 “ thereof do proceed as above directed, whether any
 “ others

" others of the Synod concur with them or not, or not
 " withstanding that others, or even the greatest Part then
 " present, should oppose the Execution of this Act: And
 " in case the Synod, or such Number of them as above-
 " mentioned, shall not before the first of *November* enter
 " the Presentee upon Trials, or before the first of *March*
 " finish the same, the Assembly impower a special Com-
 " mission of the said General Assembly to convene at *E-*
 " *dinburgh* on the third *Wednesday* of *November* or *March*
 " respectively, with Power to adjourn themselves as they
 " shall think fit, in order to take Trials, and ordain the
 " Presentee as Minister of *Denny*." Also, the same As-
 " sembly appoint a Settlement in the Town and Parish of
 " *Perth*, upon the Footing of the Act 1732, even when the
 " Majority of the Elders of the said Parish were dissenting
 " from the said Settlement, and a constitute Session reclaim-
 " ing against the same, before all the Judicatories of the
 " Church. Likewise, the Assembly 1738 appointed a vio-
 " lent Settlement in the Parish of *Dron*, the Call being on-
 " ly signed by the Heritors and one Elder of the said Parish,
 " and the most Part of the Congregation by far dissenting
 " and reclaiming: As also, they sustained a Call for Doctor
 " *Wisheart* to be one of the Ministers of *Edinburgh*, which
 " proceeded purely upon the Footing of the repealed Act
 " 1732.

The above are some Instances of some violent Settle-
 ments, amongst others that might be condescended upon,
 which have been either authorised or supported by the
 National Assemblies of late; besides Instances of this kind,
 that might be offered from the Procedure of the Commis-
 sions of the several General Assemblies, by vertue of their
 delegated Power from them, since the Assembly 1734:
 Therefore our Author must needs have very much Assu-
 rance, when he would have his Reader to believe that
 some Stop, yea, that a considerable Stop, has been put to
 violent Intrusions for some Time bygone. Does he think
 with his fair and smooth Words to put out the Eyes of
 Men? It is indeed to be regreted, that the most Part are
 so obstinately blind, that they will not see the Grounds and
 Causes of the Lord's Controversy against us; and our Au-
 thor's Reasonings have a manifest Tendency to cherish
 them in their wilful Blindness and Darkness. Likewise,
 from the above Instances we may plainly see, that the pre-
 sent Judicatories are worse, yea, vastly worse, than when
 the Secession was at first stated and declared. Was ever

Tyranny over the Consciences of Men screwed higher by the Church of *Rome*, than it is by the Assembly 1737, when they declare, *That it shall not be lawful* for the Synod of *Perth* to put any Question, whether they should obey their Appointment or not? Here is absolute and implicate Obedience demanded with a Witness. Besides, the Judicatories are vastly worse, in regard they continue in the Practice of violent Intrusions, in Face of a more publick and more open Testimony against the same, and when the Sinfulness of them is now become a Point of Confession amongst the Members of this particular visible Church. I humbly judge, that it is an Aggravation of the Sin of the Judicatories, when Petitions, Representations and Remonstrances in a way of Church-communion have not reclaimed them; and that it is yet a higher Aggravation of their Sin, when a Testimony is lifted up against their Procedure in a way of Secession from them, on account of their complex Course of Defection from the Lord, and therefore on account of violent Intrusions amongst many other Things, that they should, notwithstanding of this, continue to oppress, break and scatter the Sheep of the Lord's Pasture.

4thly, As if the Injury done to Truth by former Assemblies in the Affair of Mr. *Simson* had not been enough, Truth is wounded over and over again; particularly, when the Assembly 1736 dismiss Mr. *Campbell* from their Bar. Tho' a Scheme of dangerous Principles was vented and published by him, and also defended at the Bar of the said Assembly; yet he is not only acquit by the said Assembly from the Charge of Error, and dismissed without any particular Admonition given him; but one of his dangerous and destructive Errors was adopted by the said Assembly, as I have already observed. And likewise, when at the last Assembly the Presbytery of *Edinburgh* brought unto their Bar several gross Principles contained in two Sermons preached by Doctor *Wiseheart*, whereby Confessions of Faith in general are undermined, Subscriptions unto them being subtilly condemned, as great Bars against a free and impartial Enquiry, arising from a Regard to worldly Interest; as also, whereby some important Articles contained in our Confession of Faith are overthrown: Yet the said Assembly assolizied him from the Charge of Error in the Manner I have already mentioned. On all which accounts, the present Judicatories are worse, yea, vastly worse, since the Time that the Protestation was entred against the Assembly 1733.

5thly, If the Conduct of the Ministers and Judicatories of this National Church with reference to the late Act of Parliament anent Captain *John Porteous* is considered, it will appear, that the present Judicatories are *worse*, yea, *vastly worse*, than when the above Protestation was entred. As this Act of Parliament was appointed to be read by all the Ministers of this Church, the first Lord's Day of every Month, for the Space of twelve Months, and at the Time when the Church was assembled for the publick Worship of God; so the most Part of the Ministry of this Church did actually read this Act from their Pulpits in one Shape or another. I shall not insist at large upon the Sinfulness and Scandal of this Practice, but only make a few Remarks upon it, for confirming and illustrating the present Argument.

As the foresaid Act of Parliament contains several Things that have no Manner of Foundation in the Word of God, so the Reading of the same by Ministers from the Pulpit, in Time of the solemn Worship of God, was a Publishing the Doctrines and Commandments of Men unto the Church assembled together for hearing the Voice of the great Shepherd the Lord Jesus; whereby the Readers of the said Act profaned the Lord's Day, exposed the Office of the Ministry, hardned a wicked Generation, and grieved and stumbled many of the Lord's People. Likewise, the Imposing of the said Act to be read in Time of Divine Worship, was a giving Directions and Instructions unto Ministers of the Gospel, in the Exercise of their Ministerial and Spiritual Function: This is indeed a Branch of that Supremacy that the Powers of the Earth have claimed over the House of God, and the Readers of the said Act have tamely submitted to the same; whereby they have practically owned and acknowledged, that they may receive Directions and Instructions in the Exercise of their Ministerial Functions from the Civil Powers; and consequently they have declared themselves the Servants of Men, or they have thereby declared, that they are not regulated and governed in the Exercise of their holy Function by Jesus Christ alone, but also by the Civil Powers. If it is said, that Ministers may warrantably yield Obedience unto such Commands of the Civil Magistrate as are not contrary to the Word of God; no doubt they may and ought: Ministers are nowise exempted from Subjection to the Civil Magistrate more as other Subjects, yea, they ought to be Patterns and Examples unto all others

of Obedience and Subjection to their lawful Commands ; yet, in the mean Time, it is only as Members of the Commonwealth that they are subject unto the Magistrate, and not in their Office as Ministers, which they receive and hold from the Head of the Church alone. And tho' the Magistrate is Guardian of both Tables of the Law, and may warrantably command, *that every Thing in the House of the God of Heaven, be done according to the Will of the God of Heaven* ; yet he is not, by vertue of his Office, an Interpreter unto the Church of the Laws of Christ : Therefore it is not his Province to give Instructions to Ministers of the Gospel in the Exercise of their Ministerial Function, and far less to prescribe in an authoritative Manner unto Ministers, any Laws, Acts and Statutes whatsoever, to be published unto the Church in his own Name, and by his own Authority. It is the peculiar Province of the Courts of Christ's spiritual Kingdom, ministerially to declare the Laws and the Will of Christ the Head of the Church, from the holy Scriptures ; and to publish the same unto the Church, in his Name and Authority, who is the only Lord and Lawgiver unto his Church and People.

But the Penalty annexed unto the foresaid Act deserves some more particular Consideration. It is expressly statute, That, in case any Minister shall neglect to read the said Act, he shall for the first Offence be declared *incapable of sitting or voting in any Church-judicatory*. The several Writers against the Reading of this Act of Parliament have observed, that the declaring Ministers *incapable* of sitting and voting in any Church-judicatory, is a depriving them of the Exercise of a considerable Branch of their Ministerial Office ; consequently, that it is an Ecclesiastick Censure, and that the Parliament in the foresaid Penalty have assumed to themselves the Power of the Keys ; and that this is an Erastian Power exercised over the Church, altogether incompetent for any Civil Court ; and that Penalties of this Kind belong only unto Ecclesiastical Courts : And hence they argue, That the Reading of the Act was a sinful Compliance with an Erastian Usurpation over the Judicatories of the Church. The Argument has been very well managed in this Shape, against the Reading of the said Act, by several judicious Writers ; therefore I shall not here further insist upon it : Only I must beg Leave to add a few Remarks on the foresaid Penalty, to illustrate the Argument in Hand.

1st, When it is declared that such as neglect to read the said Act shall be incapable of *sitting* or *voting* in any Church-judicatory, the Reading of this Act is made a Condition and Qualification of Ministers their *sitting* and *voting* in Church-judicatories : Hereby the Parliament assume to themselves a Power of appointing and determining the Qualifications of such who shall have Power to sit and vote in the Courts of the Lord's House, or who shall be judged capable of exercising an essential Part and Branch of the Pastoral Office, namely, the Exercise of the Keys of Government and Discipline.

2^{dly}, By the above Penalty it is likewise plain, that the Parliament claim to themselves a Power of emitting Acts, Orders and Constitutions concerning the constituent Members of the Judicatories of Christ's House, and consequently concerning the Constitution of Ecclesiastical Courts. And therefore,

3^{dly}, By the foresaid Penalty, the Parliament claim to themselves a Superiority over Ecclesiastical Judicatories *as such* ; and, according to their foresaid Statute, these are considered as so far subordinate to the Parliament, that they may determine who shall not be held and reputed as constituent Members of these Courts. Hence,

4^{thly}, The Parliament, by the same Penalty, assume to themselves a Power, whereby they may enact such Laws and Orders as may debar from Church-judicatories, or from *sitting* and *voting* in them, such as have all those Qualifications which give them full Warrant and Authority from the Lord Jesus, the Head of the Church, to *sit* and *vote* in the Courts of his House ; and thus Ecclesiastical Judicatories are still so far subordinated unto the Civil Powers, that they may model them with respect unto their constituent Members according to their Will and Pleasure. If these Things are duly considered, we shall find that the foresaid Penalty contains the very Substance and Soul of the Erastian *Supremacy*, as it was asserted and declared by our *Scots* Parliament when it was screwed up to its highest Pitch, particularly by the first Act of that Session of Parliament that met *October* 19th 1669, where, amongst other Things, it is declared and enacted, " That the *King* and his Successors have the
 " Supreme Authority and Supremacy over all Persons, and
 " in all Causes Ecclesiastick within this Kingdom ;—and
 " that they may settle, enact and emit such Constitutions,
 " Acts and Orders, concerning the Administration of the
 " external

“ external Government of the Church and the Persons
 “ employed in the same, and concerning all Ecclesiastical
 “ Meetings and Matters to be proposed and determined
 “ therein, as they in their Royal Wisdom shall think fit.”

From what has been observed it may be evident, that the very same Supremacy over the Judicatories is upon the Matter claimed by the foresaid Penalty, which our *Scots* Parliament declared and asserted to be in the Person of the King and his Successors; and this very Supremacy was witnessed against by the Presbyterian Church of *Scotland* in the Face of the greatest Tyranny and Violence, in the late Times of cruel Persecution. Her known Principles are, That the Lord Jesus Christ alone, as Mediator, is Head, Lord and Lawgiver unto his Church; and that to him alone it belongs to give Laws, Ordinances and Statutes unto the Office-bearers of his House, in their several Spiritual and Ecclesiastical Functions and Administrations; and that all the Courts and Judicatories of his House are subordinate to him alone in their Ecclesiastical Functions and Administrations; and that unto the Lord Jesus alone it appertains to give Instructions unto his Ministers, to regulate them in the Exercise of their Ministry, and to prescribe Laws and Rules concerning the Meetings of his own Courts and their constituent Members, as also to determine the Qualifications of the Office-bearers of his House who have Right to *sit* and *vote* in his own Courts. If the Courts of Christ's House are framed and modelled according to the Laws, Acts and Constitutions of Men, as is done by the foresaid Penalty, then they are no more the Courts of Christ, their Constitution is changed, they hold not of Christ the Head alone in their Ecclesiastical Meetings and Administrations; and, as they are thereby subordinated unto the Civil Powers, they are not to be reckoned Ecclesiastick but Civil Courts. The grand Defence that is made against the Erastian Penalty annexed to the above Act is, That no more is intended by it, but that such as should neglect to read the Act cannot *sit* and *vote* in Judicatories that have the *legal Establishment*; or, that they thereby forfeit the legal Countenance and Protection; and that it is only Ministers Power and Right of sitting and voting in Church-judicatories, as they enjoy it in virtue of Civil Statutes, that can justly be understood. Thus some Writers upon this Subject have thought fit to express themselves; And, what is the Amount of this Reasoning? It appears to me to be just as much as if

if it were said, That Ecclesiastical Judicatories, which have the legal Establishment, may and ought to receive Acts, Orders and Statutes from the Civil Powers concerning their Meetings and constituent Members; and consequently, that Ecclesiastical Judicatories, in so far as they have the legal Establishment, or the Authority of Civil Statutes on their Side, are subordinate to the Civil Powers: And this is nothing else but to plead the legal Establishment for giving up with the Sovereignty and Headship of the Lord Jesus over his own House, and for subjecting the Courts of his Spiritual Kingdom unto the Authority and Commands of Men; and in this Case it were far better that the Church wanted the legal Establishment, than to enjoy it at such a costly Rate. The Countenance of Civil Authority is not necessary to the Being of the Church, tho' it is indeed very profitable and useful unto her outward peaceable Being, and is promised as a great outward Blessing unto the Church in New-Testament Times, *Isa.* xlix. 23. and lx. 5, 10. *Rev.* xvii. 16. But, when is it that the Countenance of Civil Authority is a Blessing unto the Church of Christ? It is when the Civil Power is employed for the Support and Defence of the Office-bearers of the Church in the faithful Discharge of their Duty, and for the Protection of the Courts of his Kingdom in all their several just Rights and Privileges. As the Magistrate's Power over the Church is not privative or destructive, so, if the Countenance of Civil Authority is pled for depriving her of the least of these Rights and Privileges that are given her by her exalted Head, the legal Establishment becomes in this Case a Snare and a Judgment unto the Church; and it is none of the least of the Rights and Privileges of Christ's Spiritual Kingdom, that the Office-bearers of his House have a Claim to the Exercise of the Keys in the Name of the *King of Zion*, and in Subordination to him alone, as the only Lord and Lawgiver unto his Church and People.

From what is above observed, concerning the late Act of Parliament anent Captain *John Porteous*, it is evident, that the Civil Powers have claimed to themselves such a Superiority over the Office-bearers of the House of God, in their Spiritual and Ecclesiastical Functions and Administrations, as they have thereby declared them to be subordinate unto the Civil Authority in their said Functions and Administrations: And therefore the Submission that has been given by the most Part of the Ministry to the said

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Erastian Usurpation, must needs be constructed a submitting themselves in the Exercise of their Ministry to Men, and a taking their Holding for the Exercise of the Keys of Government and Discipline from the Civil Powers; whereby they have practically given up with the sole Headship and Sovereignty of Christ over his Spiritual Kingdom, and acknowledged that the Judicatories, as they enjoy the Civil or Legal Establishment, are immediately subordinate unto the Civil Powers, and may and ought to receive Acts and Orders from them concerning their Ecclesiastical Meetings, their constituent Members, together with the Qualifications of such Members. Let us here also consider what has been the Conduct of the Judicatories of this Church since the above Act of Parliament did take Place: When, by the Penalty annexed to the said Act of Parliament, the Civil Powers have plainly and expressly declared that the Ecclesiastick Judicatories in *Scotland*, by vertue of the Civil or Legal Establishment granted unto them, are subordinate unto the Civil Magistrate, this was a loud Call unto the Judicatories to bear plain and express Testimony unto the alone Sovereignty and Headship of Christ over his own House, and for asserting the just Rights and Privileges of his Spiritual Kingdom, in Opposition unto the above Encroachment made thereupon; now was the Season for such a Testimony, now was the Season for discharging a Duty, the Omission of which was justly complain'd of and regreted by many, at our wonderful Deliverance from Popery, Tyranny and Slavery *Anno* 1688. But it is to be regreted that no Testimony of this Kind has been given by any of the present Judicatories of this National Church; yea, some Synods, particularly the Synod of *Perth* and *Stirling*, did, at their Meeting *October* 1737, give an ample Testimony to the Readers of the above Act as *true Presbyterians*, and that they did it from a Sense of Duty: This was a saying *A Confederacy* unto them in their Sin, and a hardning of them in their Iniquity. And the last General Assembly of this National Church, which was the first that met after the Imposing and Reading of the said Act, gave no Manner of Testimony against the Dishonour done to the King of Zion, and the Encroachment that was made upon his Spiritual Kingdom by the Enacting and Reading of the same: Neither could any other Thing be expected from them, when the most Part of the constituent Members of that Assembly were involved in this grievous Sin and Scandal.

Upon the Whole, Since by the above-mentioned Act of Parliament, and the Reading thereof, the present Judicatories of this National Church, as they enjoy the Civil or Legal Establishment, are declared and acknowledged to be subordinate unto the Civil Powers, and since no Testimony has been offered by any of the said Judicatories against this grievous Encroachment upon the Power and Authority of the King of Zion over his own Spiritual Kingdom, it plainly follows, that this Usurpation is submitted unto by the Judicatories of this National Church; and therefore, by their Submission unto the same, their Constitution is so far altered and changed, that they cannot be held and esteemed as Courts that are immediately subordinate unto the King of Zion, but as Courts that have changed their Holding, and who have subordinated themselves unto the Civil Powers: Hence it is evident that they are vastly worse than when the Protestation was entred *Anno 1733*.

A 6th Instance I give is the Act of the last Assembly against the seceding Brethren. This is an Act of a very extraordinary Nature; it is an Act that loads the seceding Brethren in a very grievous Manner, without any sufficient Evidence brought against them; 'tis an Act that condemns their judicial *Act and Testimony*: And yet there is not one Particular in it that is found or alledged to be contrary to the Word of God, or the received and acknowledged Principles of the Church of *Scotland*. The Charge that is laid by the said Act against the seceding Ministers is, That they have "seceded from the Communion of this Church," and made a positive Separation therefrom." The Evidence that is brought for the Notoriety of these Facts is, That Representations and Complaints have been laid before them concerning the said Conduct of these Ministers, as also "the personal Knowledge of many of the Ministers of the said Assembly." The seceding Ministers are neither afraid nor ashamed to own that they have made a Secession from the present Judicatories of this National Church; but they refuse that they have ever seceded from the Communion of the Church of *Scotland*, or that they have made any Kind of Separation from her. The Assembly further add, "That the said Ministers have seceded from this Church without any justifiable Grounds; and that they continue in their unwarrantable Secession, notwithstanding of their own solemn Engagements to the contrary at their Ordination, &c." And further, their Secession is declared to be a *Schism*, yea, a *dangerous Schism*: And, in the

Close of the Act, it is declared to be " dangerous to the
 " Peace of this Church, contrary to the Spirit of the Gos-
 " pel, very hurtful to Religion and serious Godliness, to
 " Christian Charity and brotherly Love ;" and such as ad-
 here to the seceding Brethren and their judicial *Act and*
Testimony, are declared to be a Company of poor *deluded*
People. One would think that such a Sentence, past by
 a National Assembly against several Ministers of the Go-
 spel, should be founded upon very clear and convincing
 Grounds and Evidences. When they declare that the pre-
 sent Secession is without any justifiable Grounds, and that
 the seceding Ministers are Deluders of the People, have
 they ever examined the Grounds upon which the Secession
 is stated? Either they knew them, or not. If they knew
 them, ought they not to have considered them and weigh-
 ed them in the Balances of the Sanctuary? and was it not
 their Duty to have compared them with our received and
 approved Standards, before they had condemned the sece-
 ding Ministers as counteracting their Ordination-engage-
 ments, and as dangerous Schismatics and Deluders of the
 People? But to condemn them in the Manner fore said, mere-
 ly because they have seceded, and without enquiring into
 their Principles, or examining the Grounds of their Secession
 according to the Word of God and our approved Stan-
 dards, is a dealing with them by mere Authority; 'tis a
 dealing with them in a Manner that can neither convince
 nor persuade the Consciences of Men. The Council of
Trent, before they condemned the *Protestants* as *Schismatics*
 excerpted out of their Testimonies and Writings several,
 of their doctrinal Propositions, and made some Shew of
 examining of them; but a National Assembly of the Church
 of *Scotland*, by a solemn Act and Sentence, condemn eight
 Ministers as dangerous *Schismatics*, without condescending
 upon any erroneous Principle maintained by them: They
 declare the Grounds of their Secession to be unjustifiable;
 but what these Grounds are, they have not told. They
 cannot alledge, that they did not know the Grounds upon
 which the Secession is stated; for the Act of Assembly
 bears, That the *Act, Declaration and Testimony* of the se-
 ceding Ministers, and their other Papers, assign the
 Grounds of their unreasonable and irregular Conduct.
 And they further add, That the seceding Ministers, in
 their said *Testimony* and Papers, do, " with the Air of a
 " paramount Power and Authority, condemn this Church
 " and the Judicatories for their Proceedings, and cast ma-
 " ny

“ny groundless and calumnious Reflections upon her and “them.” If a general Council should let go a Testimony for Truth, why may not a Presbytery, constitute in the Name of the Lord Jesus, judicially assert the Truth, without assuming to themselves a paramount Power and Authority? The Councils of *Ariminum* and *Constantianople*, which comprehended both the Eastern and Western Churches, did, in the Years 359 and 360, let slip the true Faith concerning the Deity of Christ, as it was asserted and held forth by the Council of *Nice*: But, in the Year 362, an Assembly of *Confessors* being met at *Alexandria*, (so *Ruffin* in his History designs them, *Pauci Numero*, &c. that is, *few in Number*, but *many* on account of their *Soundness of the Faith*) decreed, that the Ringleaders of the Apostasy should be cut off from the Church; and that others, who renounced their Error, and returned unto the Faith, should be received again into the Bosom of the Church *. Did these few Confessors assume to themselves a paramount Power over all the Churches of the then known World? or, were they in the Wrong in their honest and faithful judicial Determination? If an Oecumenick Council should swerve from the Faith, may not one Minister doctrinally bear Testimony to the Truth? And, if one may do it doctrinally, why may not several Ministers, associate together, emit a judicial Testimony for Truth, when the Judicatories of a particular visible Church either depart from the Truth, or neglect a judicial Testimony for the Support of the same? I say, Why may not this be done, without assuming a paramount Power? 'Tis no other Power but what the Lord Jesus has given to the Office-bearers of his House, and it is no other Power but what they are warranted by him in the Case mentioned to exercise. If the Judicatories of this National Church had done their Duty, the seceding Brethren would not have had Ground either for their Association or for such a Procedure.

The Assembly having declared the seceding Brethren dangerous Schismatics, &c. they conclude, “That they
“might proceed upon these Accounts in the due Exercise
“of Discipline, to appoint these separating Brethren and
“their Followers to be proceeded against and censured
“according to the Demerit of their Faults; yet, chusing
“rather still to treat them in the Spirit of Meekness,
“brotherly Love and Forbearance, they injoin all the Mi-

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“nisters

“ nisters of this National Church as they shall have Ac-
 “ cess, and especially the Ministers of the Synods and
 “ Presbyteries within which these seceding Brethren reside,
 “ to be at all Pains, by Conference and other gentle
 “ Means of Perswasion, to reclaim and reduce them to
 “ their Duty, and the Communion of this Church, &c.”

The Assembly think fit to speak of treating the Brethren in the Spirit of Meekness, brotherly Love, &c. and yet at the same Time they are condemned as dangerous Schismatics, before the Grounds of their Secession are either enquired into or examined: And therefore the Conferences appointed with them, upon the specious Pretexs of brotherly Love, and gentle Means of Perswasion, must be to this Effect; *The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland have found, that you are Separatists from this Church; that your Secession is unwarrantable; that it is without any justifiable Grounds; and that you have assumed a paramount Power and Authority to yourselves, and are promoting a dangerous Schism; that you are seducing and deluding the People: Therefore they have appointed us to commune with you, in order to reclaim and reduce you to your Duty; and, if you will not be reclaimed and reduced unto your Duty, the Commission are impowered to take all proper Steps and Methods for duly sisting you before the next Assembly, there to answer for your irregular Conduct and all the Parts thereof.* Is this to treat them in the Spirit of Meekness? Are these the gentle Means of Perswasion? Who could expect that the seceding Brethren would enter into Conferences with any upon the above Terms, whereby their Testimony and the whole of their Conduct is condemned as a dangerous Schism, and that without any Regard to what they might offer for their own Vindication? I hope they are ready to give a Reason of that Hope that is in them to any that ask it; but, in the mean Time, it cannot be expected that they should act an inconsistent Part with the Testimony which they are bound in Duty to hold.

I further observe, That the foresaid Act against the seceding Brethren reflects upon their appointing Fasts in different Corners of the Country; and the Reflection contains an indecent Insinuation, unworthy of such a Reverend Body: “ To which Fasts (*say they*) there is a Re-
 “ sort of several Thousands of Persons of both Sexes; and
 “ too many of them, as there is good Ground to think,
 “ come there with other Views than to promote Religi-
 “ on.” Are not all our publick Assemblies for Worship
 made

made up of Persons of both Sexes? and is it not their Duty to resort unto them? Can any of our publick Assemblies for Worship be purged of such Persons, of whom there is too much Ground to think that they come there with other Views than to promote Religion? Yet, even many such have been effectually called by the Word of the Gospel, and made Monuments of the rich and sovereign Grace of God in Christ Jesus. As for the Fasts appointed by the Associate Presbytery, there is no Doubt but that too many resort unto them with other Views than to promote Religion; but I hope that there are others that frequent them for their spiritual Edification, and who have Reason and Ground to bless the Lord for such solemn Meetings.

From what I have observed upon the Act of the last Assembly against the seceding Brethren, it is evident, that it contains a general Condemnation of their Testimony, without condescending upon any particular Instances of any Thing adopted by them contrary to the Word of God, or the laudable Acts and Constitutions of the Church of Scotland; yea, by the said Act of Assembly, all the Proceedings of the present Judicatories are justified, and the seceding Ministers are condemned as casting many *groundless* and *calumnious Reflections* upon them in their said *Act and Testimony*, and in other Papers emitted by them: Hence 'tis also plain, that the particular Steps of Defection both of present and former Times, contained in the Presbytery's *Act and Testimony*, are reckoned *injurious* and *calumnious Reflections*. The present Judicatories then are so far from acknowledging their Iniquity, and returning to the Lord, that they condemn the seceding Ministers for bearing Testimony unto the Truth; they not only refuse to lift up a judicial Testimony for Truth themselves, but they condemn others who are endeavouring to do it: Therefore I cannot but look upon this Procedure as an Instance that they are *worse* than when the Protestation was entred against the Assembly 1733. And, from all the above particular Instances that I have given, the Author of the *Essay* may see that the present Judicatories are *worse*, yea, *vastly worse*, than when the said Protestation was entred: As also, he may see, that the Grounds of Secession from the present Judicatories, as the same was stated before the Commission of the General Assembly 1733, do still subsist; and that the Procedure of the Judicatories from Time to Time

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has been such, as not only gives just Ground for the seceding Brethren to continue in their Secession, but also to enlarge the same further than it was stated before the Commission of the General Assembly *Anno* 1733.

I shall only further observe upon the present Proceedings of the Judicatories, That having thrust out from Communion with them some Ministers, because they were contending within the said Judicatories against several Steps of Defection; these Ministers judged it their Duty to associate together, that they might testify in a judicial Capacity for the Truths of God, as also, that they might contribute their Endeavours, in the same Capacity, for the Help and Relief of the Lord's oppressed Heritage through the Land: And now the Judicatories will have them to return again to their Communion; and, if they will not, they threaten to process and libel them, that is, they will have them forced back again into their Communion, even tho' the Grounds of their Secession are so far from being removed, that, in all the above particular Instances named, the said Grounds are strengthened and increased. I may therefore leave it to any unbiassed Person to judge if this is either a consistent or reasonable Procedure.

I shall now conclude this Section with laying before the Reader a short Sum of the Argument for Secession from the present Judicatories, and for the Exercise of the Keys in a distinct Capacity from them, as I have stated and laid the same in this Chapter, *viz.* This National Church, as she is represented in her present Judicatories, is not a confessing Church; she has not the Scripture-character of the Church of the living God; in regard her Judicatories refuse to do Justice to Truth, in condemning particularly and expressly many gross and pernicious Errors that have been brought to their Bar, whereby the Scheme of Divine Truth laid down from the Word of God in our Confession of Faith is subverted; as also, in regard the Erroneous have been dismissed from their Bar, either without Censure, or with no Censure proportioned to the Scandal and Offence they have given. In like Manner, the said Judicatories are tyrannical in their Administration, and that not in a few single Instances only, but in a Series and Tract of Violence done unto the Heritage of God; whereby they not only obtrude Ministers upon the Church, but even appoint the right Hand of Fellowship to be given to Intruders, by such Synods and Presbyteries as have been reclaiming against
such

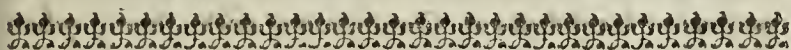
such Violence; and likewise they appoint and ordain, that the Members of the Church should submit to the Ministry of those that are imposed upon them, as if they were lawful and sent Ministers of Christ, or otherwise be deprived of the Seals of the Covenant. And further, this Tyranny in the Administration is manifested in several Acts and Deeds, whereby sinful and unwarrantable Terms of Ministerial and Christian Communion have been laid down, and the Judicatories of the Church do still persist in refusing to do Justice to injured Truth, as also in their Tyranny in the Administration: And, of late, the most Part of Ministers having actually submitted unto such Usurpations of the Civil Powers, whereby the Courts and Judicatories of the Lord's House are held and declared to subsist and stand in a direct Subordination unto the said Powers; and the present Judicatories having given no Manner of Testimony at all against the said grievous Usurpation, but having continued with a silent Submission under the same, their Constitution is thereby changed, and they have virtually consented to take their Holding, with respect to the Disposal and Ordering of their constituent Members and their Qualifications, directly and immediately of the Civil Powers: And further, the said Judicatories have and do persist and continue in the above and the like sinful Practices, notwithstanding the ordinary Means have been used to reclaim them, particularly by Petitions, Representations, Dissents and Protestations against many of the above Practices complained of; by all which they have departed from our received and approved Standards of Doctrine, Worship, Government and Discipline, and consequently have broke the Bond of Ecclesiastical Union in this particular visible Church: Therefore a Secession from Ecclesiastical Conjunction and Communion with the present Judicatories is necessary Duty, ay and until they return to our Reformation-standards; and such as are sensible of their Duty, and who desire to be found faithful to the Lord in this Day of Degeneracy and Backsliding, have Right on their Side, both from the Word of God and from the Acts and Constitutions of this Church, from our solemn Covenant-engagements, and from the Engagements that each Minister comes under at his Ordination to the Ministry, by all which they are bound to hold fast what we in this reformed Church and Land have received; as also, in regard they cannot otherwise discharge several Duties that their Station

and

and Office oblige them unto, and which the present State of the Church of Christ in this Land requires, they have Right, I say, to associate together in a distinct judicative Capacity from the present Judicatories, that they may display the Banner of a Testimony for the Truths of Christ, for the Freedom of his Spiritual Kingdom, and the Rights of his Subjects, in Opposition to the Injury that is done to Truth, to the Invasions that are made upon his Spiritual Kingdom, and the Violence that is done to his Subjects; and this, as a Debt that *Zion* owes to her God, and as a Branch of that Revenue of Glory and Praise that is due from the Church unto her exalted Head, and as a publick Debt that she ought to discharge for the Sake of the present and succeeding Generations.

It is to be regreted, that such is the State of Matters in the Judicatories of this National Church, that I have so much Ground for laying my Argument in the above Manner against them; I have been obliged unto it, for the Defence of that Cause which I doubt not is the Cause of Truth, and which the Associate Presbytery, whereof I am a Member, have by their judicial *Act and Testimony* espoused. I have in this, and in the preceeding Sections, endeavoured to explain and give my Reasons for the Verity and Truth of the several Particulars contained in the above Charge: And it is with some Measure of Concern that I find the Conclusion which comes out from the several Premisses that I have laid down may be expressed in the following Terms, *viz.* Since the present Judicatories of this National Church refuse to confess the Truths of God in direct Opposition unto such dangerous Errors whereby they have been subverted; and since, by several particular Acts and Deeds, they are tyrannical in their Administration; and since they are constitute of such Members as are obtruded upon the Church, and therefore have no Right nor Warrant from the Head of the Church to sit in his Courts, nor to rule and govern his Flock, yea, constitute of such Members who are scattering the Flock of Christ, and ruling over them with Force and Rigour, by which and the like Practices they have given Scandal and Offence to the Church of God; as also, since the said Judicatories have, by their silent Submission unto the Usurpations that have been made upon the Kingdom of Christ and the Courts thereof, virtually and practically given up with their Holding of the King of *Zion*, whereby the Constitution of the several Judicatories of this National Church

Church is changed; and finally, since they continue to justify themselves in these and the like Practices: Therefore, for the above, and for all the other Reasons that have been more particularly specified and expressed, the present Judicatories of this National Church cannot be held nor repute as *lawful* or *right-constitute* Courts of Christ; and consequently it is the Duty of such as desire to be found faithful to the Lord to come out from among them, and to make use of the Keys of Government and Discipline for the Ends and Purposes for which they are given unto the Office-bearers of the Church by her glorious and exalted Head. And, in like Manner, it is the Duty of all who fear the Lord through the Land, and who desire to hold fast that Reformation-purity once attained unto, steadfastly to adhere unto any Testimony emitted by such Office-bearers, for the Truths of God, and against a Course of Defection and Deviation from them, whether in present or former Times; the Command being given to all the Members of the Church, according to their different Spheres and Stations, to *stand fast in one Spirit, with one Mind, striving together for the Faith of the Gospel*, Philip. i. 27.



C H A P. III.

Wherein the Arguments advanced by the Author of the Essay, against Secession from the present Judicatories, are examined.

THE Author of the *Essay* proceeds in his fifth Chapter to give us what he calls his *weighty Arguments* against Separation; but, since he has never distinctly stated the Question, I cannot expect to find that his Arguments shall be laid in a fair or plain Manner: Sometimes they appear to be levelled against the Sectarian Separatists, sometimes against a Book called *Plain Reasons*, &c. But, since in his Title-page he states the seceding Brethren as his only Adversaries, I shall consider his Arguments as directed against the Conduct of the Associate Presbytery, whom he think fit to class with the worst Schismatics and Separatists. In his Preamble to his Arguments

ments, in the Beginning of the fifth Chapter, "Separation" (*says he*) from a true Church, except in the above or "like Cases, was always reckoned a hainous Sin by the Judicious and Tender, albeit her Faults should be many." I have already noticed the Ambiguity in the Terms, *true Church*, as used by him. By the *above* and *like Cases*, he means the Cases mentioned in his *fourth* Chapter, where he mentions six general Grounds of Separation: And I have likewise observed, that he is neither distinct nor plain upon any of them, except upon the *fifth*, when he tells us, p. 35. "That such Ministers as are evidently scandalous may be withdrawn from, albeit, thro' the Iniquity of the Times, they should not be censured by a Church-judicatory, when complained of." And here I might ask our Author, Whether or not such are evidently scandalous, who have an active Hand in obtruding Ministers upon the Church, or who have practically given up with the sole Headship and Sovereignty of Christ over his Spiritual Kingdom, or who have pled that Self-interest must bear the Sway in all our Actions whatsoever; Whether or not, I say, such Persons are evidently scandalous, or if they have given just Ground of Offence unto the Church and People God? If our Author will grant that they are scandalous, then, how is he consistent with himself, in continuing to maintain Ecclesiastical Communion with them, when, thro' the Iniquity of the Times, they are not censured by a Church-judicatory, tho' they have been often complained of? I know not what our Author reckons *evidently scandalous*; but I doubt not to affirm, that such as are guilty of an open and publick Violation of several expresse Commands of the first Table of the Moral Law, and who justify themselves in the same, are equally scandalous, and more dangerous to the Church, as these, who may be guilty of the open Violation of the expresse Commands of the second Table of the same Law, tho' the latter ought likewise to be censured by every Church-judicatory.

The Author of the *Essay* is likewise plain upon his *sixth* general Ground of Separation, *viz.* "That the imposing the least sinful Term of Communion is just Ground of Separation from a Church." I have already evinced, that unwarrantable and sinful Terms of Communion are by several Acts and Deeds imposed upon the Ministers and Members of this Church; as also, that our Conjunction with the present Judicatories does in itself bind us up from the Discharge of several Duties which our Ministerial

sterial Office and our Ordination Vows and Engagements do oblige us unto, in the present State of Matters in this National Church. I might therefore pass over all our Author's Arguments, as nowise affecting the present Question betwixt the present Judicatories and the seceding Ministers; but in regard his Divine and human Authorities, tho' very much misapplied, are yet industriously managed to the Prejudice of the Cause of Truth, I shall briefly consider them, after I have noticed what he mentions in his Preamble, concerning the Emperor *Constantine*, who (he tells us) was so afflicted with the Dissentions of the Church in his Day, that they brought many a Tear from his Eyes, and robbed him of his Night's Rest. As the *Arian* Heresy was the Occasion of these great Dissentions of the Church in *Constantine's* Time, so, if the Indignities that have been done to the Person of Christ in our Day, and the Injuries that have been done to many important and precious Truths, had drawn Tears from the Eyes of Ministers and other Church-members, the Banner of a judicial Testimony had been displayed long ere now by the Judicatories, for injured and wounded Truth, after the Example of the Council of *Nice*, which was assisted and countenanced by that great *Emperor*. As for Mr. *King's* dying Exhortation in the Words of the Apostle, *Philip. ii. 3.* as our Author joins him in it, so I hope all the seceding Ministers do in like Manner cordially join the same. I proceed now to consider our Author's Arguments against Secession in the following Sections,

S E C T. I.

Wherein the Scripture-arguments against Secession from the present Judicatories are considered.

TH E first Argument advanced by the Author of the *Essay*, p. 39. to prove the Unwarrantableness of Separation from what he reckons a true Church, is, "That it is against the Practice of all the Saints under the Old Testament, who, notwithstanding the Corruptions of Priests and People, never separated, so as to erect a new Church, or a new Altar; and who never separated from the Worship of the true God, whatever were the Corruptions of the Church." And he proceeds to give Instances of *Zacharias* the Priest, *Mary*, *An-*

na the Prophetess, as also of our blessed Lord, and his Apostles, who all continued in Communion with the *Jewish* Church, notwithstanding of her Corruptions. I have observed in my *Postscript* to the printed Letter, that this Argument proves too much, even more than our Author himself will own; namely, That we ought to submit to Gospel-ordinances dispensed by Men grossly immoral in their Walk and Practice; for such were some of the *Jewish* Priests, in these degenerate Times that our Author mentions. But the Author of the *Essay* delivers his Opinion very plainly upon this Head, when he tells us, as I have noticed above, *Essay*, p. 35. That "such as are evidently scandalous may be withdrawn from, albeit, thro' the Iniquity of the Times, they should not be censured by a Church-judicatory when complained of." And here I may leave it to our Author, to reconcile what he himself allows to be a Ground of Separation, with his first Scripture-argument according to the Way that he has thought fit to state it. Tho' I humbly judge I have said enough, to take off the Force of the above Argument, in my *Postscript* to which I refer, yet I shall add, That, if the said Argument is laid against our Secession from the present Judicatories, his Reasonings as he lays them amount to this; All the Saints under the Old Testament, notwithstanding of the Corruptions of the *Jewish* Church, never separated, so as to erect a new Church, or a new Altar, or to worship any other than the true God; therefore, if we depart from Communion with the present Judicatories, we erect a new Church, or a new Altar, and separate from the Worship of the true God. But, who may not see the Absurdity of this Reasoning? Our Author's Argument would indeed be strong, if he was able to confine the Church and Worship of God to the present Judicatories, as of old the only Place of their solemn Worship was the *Temple*, and the National Church of the *Jews* was the only visible Church upon the Face of the Earth; yea, the Church was confined to that Nation, from the Time at least that the Law was given from Mount *Sinai*, to the Rearing up of the New-Testament Church, after the Resurrection of our Lord from the Dead; and *Jerusalem*, or the *Temple*, was the instituted and appointed Place of solemn Worship unto the whole Church: But now it is no more the Seat or Place of Worship; the Prophecy has long ago taken Accomplishment, *Mal. i. 11. Per from the Rising of the Sun even unto the Going down of the*

the same, my Name shall be great among the Gentiles, and in every Place Incense shall be offered unto my Name, and a pure Offering. The visible Church is not now confined to one Nation, but consists of all these throughout the World that profess the true Religion: Hence it is evident, that when we depart from Church-communion with a particular visible Church, whether Provincial or National, on account of her Corruptions and Backslidings, we depart not from the Church, nor from the Ordinances of Divine Institution; our Secession is, in this Case, a cleaving more closely to our only New-Testament Altar Christ Jesus, and to the Ordinances of his Institution; it is not a Departure from the Church, but from the corrupt and depraved Part of the Catholick Body: And, in this, we follow the Example of the Prophets and Saints under the Old Testament, and of our blessed Lord and his Apostles, who departed from the Corruptions of the *Jewish* Church, but at the same Time did cleave to the Church, and to the Ordinances of Worship that were of Divine Institution and Appointment. If it were duly observed, that the Catholick Church is but one Body, and that the Ordinances are given primarily to the Church Catholick visible, and that every particular Church is but a Part of this one Body, and that the Secession pled for is a Secession only from a corrupt and depraved Part of the Catholick Body; it would plainly appear, that the Practice of the seceding Ministers is conform to the Practice of the Prophets and Saints under the Old Testament, who departed from the Corruptions of the *Jewish* Church, and at the same Time remained stedfast in their Observance of the Ordinances of Divine Institution and Appointment. I shall only add upon this Head, That the Papists have stated the Argument from the Old-Testament Church, against the Secession of the Protestant Churches from them, after the same Manner as the Author of the *Essay* does against his Separatists: And, if he is pleased to consult the learned *Turretine*, our Author may see his first Argument against Separation stated in the very same Manner by the Papists from the Practice of the Prophets and Saints in the Old-Testament Church, against the Secession of the Protestants from the Church of *Rome*; and, amongst other Answers given by that Learned Divine, he may find, that he takes notice of the vast Disparity betwixt the State of the Church under the Old and New Testament in the above Particulars I have named, *Disp.* 2. Sect. 4, 6. *Disp.* 8. Sect. 25, 26.

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Our Author, p. 41. tells us, That “ our Lord enjoined
 “ the People to hear them that sat in *Moses’s Seat*.” He
 does not mention the Scripture ; I judge he intends *Matth.*
xxiii. 2, 3. The Scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’s Seat ;
all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and
do, but do not ye after their Works. Our Author cannot but
 know, that this Scripture has been pled for joining in
 Communion with Prelatick Conformists ; and he cannot
 but likewise know what the worthy Authors quoted by
 him, *viz. the Hind-let-loose, and Mr. Forester in his Rectius*
instruendum, have said upon the Subject. But, in regard
 this Place of holy Scripture has been very much perverted
 and abused, I shall here transcribe what a worthy Divine,
 whom our Author frequently cites, has with a great deal
 of Judgment observed upon it, *viz. Mr. Hog in his Casu-*
istical Essay, p. 71, 72. “ I sincerely judge (*says he*) that
 “ our Lord Jesus did not command or allow to hear the
 “ Pharisaical Teachers of that Period, nor such as they
 “ were in any Age ; for when I seriously ponder (*as be-*
 “ *fore the Lord*) how clearly and pointedly their gross Ig-
 “ norance, and Perversions of the great Fundamentals both
 “ of Law and Gospel are decyphered in the Word, their
 “ bitter and implacable Hatred, and violent pursuing of
 “ the *Messias*, whom they persecuted to the utmost, even
 “ against their own Consciences, (wherein at least severals
 “ of them committed *the unpardonable Sin*) together with
 “ the Pains (may I so express it) which our Lord had
 “ taken on all Occasions to detect them unto the People,
 “ with the many Cautions he gives to *beware of them, and*
 “ *to take heed lest they should be infected with the poisonous*
 “ *Leaven of their Doctrine, and hypocritical Pageantry ;* and
 “ add to this the Woes he pronounceth against them in
 “ the Course of his Doctrine almost at every Turn, and
 “ the whole Clusters which at once he heapeth on them,
 “ and more to this Purpose, which the Gospel-history re-
 “ presenteth ; I cannot reconcile these so strong and pa-
 “ thetical Dissuasives with an Allowance to countenance
 “ the Administrations of such of them who taught pu-
 “ blickly, especially for that we are expressly prohibited
 “ to hear the *Instruction which causeth to err from the Words*
 “ *of Knowledge ;* and the poisonous Plague of heretical
 “ Doctrines and Teachers is still to be evited, chiefly
 “ when the whole Mass is corrupt, and scarce any Thing
 “ left entire (as in the present Case) and that it is both
 “ required of Christ’s Sheep, and commended as a Pro-

“ perty peculiar to them, from a supernatural and saving
 “ Instinct, to put Difference betwixt Christ’s Voice and
 “ the Voice of a Stranger; as also not to follow, but to
 “ flee from, these Strangers.” The same worthy Author
 proceeds to explain the above Words, *Matth. xxiii. 2, 3.*
 and he reckons that, according to the Original, they may
 be translated indicatively; but, in regard he does not insist
 upon this Interpretation, I shall transcribe the Commen-
 tary he gives us upon them, in his Letters frequently cited
 by our Author, p. 35. where he says, “ I doubt not but
 “ that the Scribes and Pharisees were Teachers, and, as
 “ such, I firmly believe they were not to be heard, be-
 “ cause they were Hereticks, and for other weighty
 “ Reasons before-mentioned. The Command is very ex-
 “ press, *Prov. xix. 27. Cease, my Son, to hear the Instruction*
 “ *that causeth to err from the Words of Knowledge.* Not-
 “ withstanding these Scribes and Pharisees were also Ru-
 “ lers, and Members of the great *Jewish* Council, and in
 “ this Sense were considered in a legislative Capacity.
 “ This is that Capacity wherein I think they are said (by
 “ our Lord Jesus) *to sit in Moses’s Seat*; for, whatever
 “ other Dignities *Moses* was invested with, he is mainly
 “ considered and held forth in Scripture as a Lawgiver,
 “ *John i. 17. The Law was given by Moses*; and on this
 “ Account it is, I would judge, and do tender it with all
 “ due Respect to great Divines otherwise minded, that
 “ the sitting in *Moses’s Seat* appeareth to imply Authority
 “ and Power, at least executive of these Laws which the
 “ Lord gave by *Moses*. This Exposition, tho’ not ordi-
 “ nary, yet seems native, plain and easy, and taketh off
 “ all Grounds of Exception I know; seeing we have no
 “ Cause to doubt but that Obedience was at that Time
 “ due to the *Jewish* Sanhedrim, in so far as they enjoined
 “ nothing but that which the Lord had before com-
 “ manded by *Moses*.” It is plain that the Scribes and Pha-
 risees may well be considered as Civil Rulers; and in this
 Capacity, as they were Interpreters and Executers of the
 judicial Law given by *Moses*, so Obedience was due unto
 their lawful Commands. I shall only further add upon
 this Head, That as there is a great Difference betwixt
 sitting in *Moses’s Seat*, who was King in *Jesburun*, and a
 Civil Lawgiver to that People, and sitting in *Aaron’s Seat*,
 who was an Ecclesiastical Officer; so it is most agreeable
 to the Analogy of Faith, to understand the above Words
 to respect the Scribes and Pharisees as Civil Judges or
 Rulers.

Rulers. And the worthy Divine that I have named is not singular in this Sentiment; for I find that Mr. *Forester* tells his Adversary, who pled the same *Scripture*, *Matth. xxiii. 2, 3.* for Communion with Prelatick Conformists, “ That these Pharisees might be Civil Doctors and Interpreters of *Moses’s* Judicial Law, and of *Israel’s* Municipal Law, from his Civil Chair, who was King in *Jesburun*; which will no more infer a Hearing them teach and preach as Church-officers, than our Obedience unto the King, Council, Parliament and Session, will infer that Conclusion ”

The Author of the *Essay* proceeds to argue against Separation, from the State of several eminent Churches erected by the Apostles: He observes, p. 41, 42. That many Things were amiss in these Churches, yet that we never read of any Thing like Separation enjoined; particularly, that in the Church of *Corinth* many Faults of a hainous Nature were tolerated, or not duly censured; and that in the Church of *Galatia* many had departed from him who had called them to the Grace of Christ, unto another Gospel; that *Ephesus* had fallen from her first Love; and that *Pergamos* had such in her Communion, that held the Doctrine of *Balaam*, &c. and that the Church of *Thyatira* suffered the wicked Woman *Jezebel* to seduce Christ’s Servants, &c. From all the above Instances, our Author concludes, p. 43. “ If all these were true Churches, then may a Church with many Faults and many Corruptions remain a true Church of Christ, with a lawful and visible Ministry, and for all these Faults and Corruptions cannot be separated from.” But, if the Reader will consider what I have already observed, he will find that our Author’s above Conclusion is laid in very deceitful and ambiguous Terms. If he would form the Argument, from the State of the Churches he mentions, against the Conduct of the seceding Brethren, his Conclusion should run in the following Terms; That it is unlawful and unwarrantable for the smaller Part of a Church, when the Majority are in their judicative Capacity carrying on a Course of Defection, and refuse to be reclaimed, to exercise the Keys of Government and Discipline for the Maintenance of Truth: But none of the Instances that our Author gives, can support him in this Conclusion, in regard he cannot prove that any of the Churches he mentions carried on a Course of Defection in their judicative Capacity, neither can he prove that they despised the Reproofs
and

and Admonitions that were given them. I have already observed, that the Church of *Corinth* had submitted to Reproofs and Admonitions given her by the Apostle in his first Epistle, and that *they had sorrowed after a godly Sort*, and therefore were a reforming Church; and I have likewise evinced, that the Admonitions, Warnings and Directions, given in the several Epistles directed to the Churches, do clearly point out the Duty of the smaller Part of the Office-bearers of a Church, if we shall suppose the Majority of the Office-bearers should decline, or obstinately refuse to discharge their Duty. But, if our Author will still push his Argument from the State of the Churches of *Corinth* and *Galatia*, then he must say, Tho' the Resurrection of the Dead should be denied in a Church, an Error which, the Apostle declares, subverts the whole Doctrine of Christianity, 1 *Cor.* xv. 13, 14. and tho' the Gospel of Christ should be perverted, and the grand Article of Justification should be overthrown, and tho' all this should be professed, avowed and tolerate in a Church, yet she is still such a true Church, as we must not separate from her, and are obliged to hold Ecclesiastical Communion therewith, even when she declines or refuses to testify particularly or expressly against such gross and dangerous Errors. At this Rate of Reasoning, our Seccession from the Church of *Rome*, as it was stated upon her doctrinal Articles, and especially upon the Article of Justification, which was reckoned the principal doctrinal Point upon which our Reformers stated their Seccession; at this Rate, I say, it must be condemned. And, if our Author thinks fit to consult *Turretine* on the Head of Seccession, he will likewise find, that the Popish Doctors have argued from the State of the Churches of *Corinth* and *Galatia*, against the Seccession of the reformed Churches from them; and, I humbly judge, it may be evident from what is above observed, that, according to our Author's Way of Reasoning against his Separatists, the Argument, as it is managed by the Church of *Rome*, stands in its full Force and Strength against all the Protestant Churches.

As for the Churches of *Asia*, particularly *Pergamos* and *Thyatira*, I have fully examined the Argument, as it is laid against the Conduct of the seceding Brethren, from the State of these Churches in the printed Letter, to which I refer. Since our Author has mentioned the Church of *Ephesus* as a Church that had many Corruptions, I must observe, that this Church did hold fast, by

external visible Profession, the Purity she had once attain'd; yea, she was faithful in her judicative Capacity; she tried and censured the Erroneous, *Thou canst not bear them which are evil, and thou hast tried them which say they are Apostles, and are not, and hast found them Liars,* Rev. ii. 3, 4. This is a Commendation that this National Church, as she is represented in her present Judicatories, has not any Claim or Title unto. That for which *Ephesus* is condemned and threatned, v. 4, 5. is, that the Grace of Love, that inward animating and influencing Principle, which powerfully and sweetly constrains unto Obedience, was more cool and languid than at her first Conversion from Paganism to Christianity.

The Author of the *Essay*, p. 62, 63, &c. argues against Separation, according to his Way of stating the Question, as a Sin against the Command of the great God our Saviour, *Heb. x. 25.* as opposite to the Commands of Union and brotherly Love, *1 Cor. i. 10. John xiv. 34.* as contrary to the Design of Christ's Death, *Eph. ii. 14,—16.* as a Sin against the Intercession of Christ, *John xvii. 11.* as that which is hurtful and fatal to the Church, which tends vastly to the Hurt of Religion, and which hath a direct Tendency to mar the Success of the glorious Gospel: He concludes, That Separation is commonly said to be a Renting of Christ's seamless Coat, and includes sundry other Evils in it; and therefore the Apostle is so pathetic in pressing Unity, *Eph. iv. 1, 2, 3, &c. Philip. ii. 1, 2.* The Author may enlarge as much as he pleases in condemning Separation, and in commending Union, as his Reverend Brother the Author of a Paper called the *Seasonable Testimony* has done before him, in a Flow of Words, without ever stating the Question or Argument. I humbly judge, I have equal Reason to say, That Union and Conjunction with declining and backsliding Judicatories, to the Prejudice of a suitable and necessary Testimony for Truth and against dangerous Errors and publick National Steps of Defection, or which involves the Office-bearers of the Church in the Omission or Neglect of any Duties that their Office does oblige them unto, and which I have proven to be the Union and Conjunction that our Author pleads for with the present Judicatories of this National Church; an Union and Conjunction of this Kind, I say, is contrary unto the express Command of the great Head of the Church, *Jude, v. 3.—*
Con-

Contend earnestly for the Faith once delivered unto the Saints. It is contrary to one special End and Design of the Son of God his coming into the World; he came *to bear Witness to the Truth*, John xviii. 37. he witnessed a good Confession before *Pontius Pilate*, 1 Tim. vi. 13. and he sealed his Testimony and Witness with his Death: Has he not, in all this, left us a Pattern that we should follow? Are we not under the strongest Obligations, from his Dying for us, to bear Witness and Testimony unto his Truths, when any of them are controverted or opposed, and that in every Station and Capacity in which we are placed? Ought not therefore such as are Office-bearers in his House, who desire to be found faithful unto him, when the Keys are perverted or abused by a Majority, make Use of them for asserting and maintaining the declarative Honour and Glory of the Redeemer? And ought not all the Members of the Church, who desire to approve themselves unto the Lord, in a Day of Sinning and Backsliding, adhere to any Testimony lifted up for Truth, and against a Course of Sin and Defection? Again, the above Union and Conjunction that is pled for is contrary unto our blessed Lord's intercessory Prayer, *John* xvii. The Character that he there gives of his Disciples is, that they have kept his Father's Word, *v* 6. He prays that they might be sanctified through the Truth, *v* 17. He prays for their Union and Conjunction in the Truth, *v* 21. *that they all may be one in us.* Likewise, the Union and Conjunction pled for is a saying *A Confederacy* with these who are carrying on a Course of Defection; it has a native Tendency to harden them in their Sin, in regard they may thereby justly conclude, that the Offence or Scandal which they give is not of such Moment as to make us depart from Ministerial Communion with them. Also, the above Union is hurtful to the Souls of Men; it is hurtful to these with whom we unite, in so far as it is hardning unto them in their Sin; It leaves such as are groining under the Burden of unsent Ministers, without suitable Help and Relief; in regard it puts us out of Capacity of giving Ministers unto them with their own Call and Consent, according to the Divine Pattern and Institution; and thereby many through the Land have a Famine of the Word of the Lord. Finally, such an Union and Conjunction as is pled for is prejudicial to Posterity; it binds us up from transmitting unto them such a Testimony as is necessary unto the Doctrine, Worship, Government

Discipline of our Lord's House, in a Day of Defection and Backsliding. It is true, *Peace, Union, Harmony*, are all pleasant Words; *Division, Separation, &c.* have a hateful and frightful Sound: But, what is the Unity that we ought to pursue after? Is it not the Unity of the Spirit? *Eph. iv. 3.* And, what is the Unity of the Spirit? The holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth, he is not a Spirit of Error; he is the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding in the Fear of the Lord, and not of carnal Prudence nor carnal Policy; he is a Spirit of Counsel and Might, he is not a Spirit of slavish Fear or Cowardice; he inspires with a holy Resolution and Courage for God, and the Things of Christ, for the Honour of the Redeemer's Person, and for the Glory of all his Offices, for the Rights of his Royal Crown, and the Privileges of his Spiritual Kingdom. And in these Things we ought to be of one Accord, and of one Mind, namely, in seeking the Things of Christ, even the Honour and Glory of him whom God hath highly exalted, and to whom he hath given a Name which is above every Name, that at the Name of Jesus every Knee should bow, *Philip. ii. 2, 5, 9, 10.*

S E C T. II.

Wherein the human Authorities advanced by the Author of the Essay, against Secession from the present Judicatories, are examined.

I Proceed now to take under Consideration the human Authorities, or the Testimonies of great and eminent Divines, adduced by the Author of the *Essay*, against what he calls Separation. It is needful that I should here acquaint the Reader, that he may be able to form a just Judgment upon the most Part of our Author's Testimonies, with an Observe that Mr. Baillie makes, in his *Dis-swaive from the Errors of the Time*, p. 10. When the Work of Reformation was going on successfully, by the Ministry of these eminent Instruments whom the Lord raised up to bring the Churches out of Antichristian Babylon; amongst the many Stratagems whereby Satan diverted the Progress of Reformation-work, there were two considerable ones. "In our Flight (*says he*) from Rome, he got some perswaded to stand too soon, before they had passed the Territories of the Whore, and the Line of her

“ her Communication: Others he wrought to the contrary
 “ Perswasion, he made them run on too long, not only to
 “ the utmost Line of Error, but also far beyond all the
 “ Bounds both of Charity and Truth; hence our grea-
 “ test Woes: All our Discords and mutual Wounds have
 “ sprung from these two Fountains.” Amongst the first
 he reckons *Luther* and his Followers, as also the first In-
 struments of Reformation in *England*, who, he observes,
 kept more Correspondence with their Acquaintance in
 higher *Germany*, than with *Calvin* and the *French* Divines;
 and, tho’ they did not follow *Luther* in the Doctrine of
 the Sacrament, yet retained so much of *Rome* in their
 Worship and Discipline, as has been the Occasion of all
 the woful Divisions which have rent our Bowels, and of
 grievous Persecutions which have undone many. As for
 the other Sort, who hindered the Progress of Reforma-
 tion by running on too far; these were the *German* Ana-
 baptists, who at their first Appearance had a very great
 Shew of Piety and Devotion, but in a short Time they
 proceeded to the greatest Extravagancies: However, some
 of their peculiar and distinguishing Principles were em-
 braced in *England* by one *Robert Brown*, first a School-
 master, and afterward a Preacher near *London*: He wrote
 in Defence of the Principles he espoused, yet he after-
 wards recanted them, and received a Parsonage at the
 Hand of a Bishop; but such as adopted his Principles
 were ordinarily after him called *Brownists*. The Learned
 Writer I have mentioned, gives in his second Chapter a
 large Account of their Doctrines and Principles; I shall
 only mention some few of them. They affirmed, That,
 in order to Admission unto Church-membership, it was ne-
 cessary that one should give Satisfaction to the whole Church
 of his real Sanctification and true Regeneration; and that
 not only the Office-bearers, but that all and every Member
 of the Church, was a Judge of the Qualifications of such as
 should be admitted Church-members. They likewise af-
 firmed, That if any who wanted the above Qualifications
 should be admitted to Church-fellowship, or to partake in
 the Sacraments, he should quickly so far pollute the whole
 Church, that every Member thereof must needs become
 Partaker of his Sin; and if, upon Admonition, the Church
 did not excommunicate him, they ought to be separated
 from, as an infected or leprous Society. They acknow-
 ledged no Power of Jurisdiction in any Ecclesiastical Ju-
 dicatory, above a Congregational Church. They rejected

Catechisms, as set and unlawful Forms of Instruction: They affirmed, That the Christian Magistrate had no Right to meddle at all with any Matters of Religion; and they pled for an universal *Toleration*, under the specious Pretence of *Liberty of Conscience*. And severals of the Followers of the first *Brownists* came the Length to run down the Ordinance of Preaching, and to cry down the Office of the holy Ministry; and it is very well known to what Heights they proceeded, and into how many different Sects they were divided, in the Time of *Cromwel's* Usurpation. Against the above extravagant Principles our reformed Divines imployed their Pens, and discovered the Contrariety of them to the holy Scriptures, and their Affinity to several of the gross Principles of the antient *Donatists* and *Novatians*. The above are the Principles that the most Part of our Divines, cited by the Author of the *Essay*, do reason against; and the Principles of the seceding Ministers are as far distant from them as East from West. They never reckoned that the personal Defects, Blemishes or Sins of Fellow-worshippers did pollute the Ordinances to others, or render them Partakers in their Sins; neither have they stated their Secession upon any such Bottom: But they have justly stated their Secession upon a Course of Defection, carried on by a Church in her Ecclesiastick Capacity, from Steps of Reformation once attained unto. They do not plead for positive Signs of Regeneration, as a necessary Qualification of Church-membership; they agree with the reformed Churches, that a credible Profession of the Faith, with an outward Subjection unto the Ordinances of the Gospel, is all that the holy Scriptures require in order unto Church-membership. They also agree with all our reformed Divines, and regard the Acts and Constitutions of the Church of *Scotland*, which require, in order to full Communion with the Church in all her sealing Ordinances, the three following Qualifications as necessary, *viz.* A Profession of the Truth, with a competent Measure of Knowledge; a Life and Conversation without Scandal; and Subjection unto the Order and Discipline of the Church. Again, the seceding Ministers do not unchurch any of the Protestant Churches, they do not reckon them Antichristian Synagogues; yet I hope the Author of the *Essay*, if he is consistent with his Presbyterian Character and Profession, will not differ from them when they say, That there are some Protestant Churches so corrupt both in their Government, Worship and Discipline,

cipline, that they cannot hold Communion with them. Upon the Whole, As the Seceſſion from the preſent Judicatories proceeds upon none of the above-mentioned Principles, but upon quite different Grounds, I might here leave our Author to boaſt of his Teſtimonies from great Men as much as he pleaſes; but I ſhall inſtance a few of them, and ſhew that they noway affect the Queſtion, in its true State, betwixt the preſent Judicatories and the ſeceding Miniſters.

The great *Calvin* is amongſt the firſt who is adduced by our Author, *Eſſay* p. 3. as alſo he is cited, p. 41. The firſt Quotation from *Calvin* is, "That wherever there is the pure Preaching of the Word, and the pure Adminiſtration of the Sacraments, we may ſafely embrace that for a true Church; and (*says he*) we are never to reject the Society thereof as long as theſe remain, albeit otherwiſe it abound with many Corruptions. Yea (*adds he*) ſome Corruptions in the Adminiſtration of Doctrine or Sacraments may creep in, which ought not to alienate us from her Communion *." The *Latin* Word which *Calvin* makes Uſe of, and which our Author renders *Corruptions*, is *Vitium*; and I humbly judge our Author's Tranſlation is too ſtrong: The Word properly ſignifies *Faults*, *Defects* or *Blemiſhes*; accordingly I find that Mr. *Norton*, in his Tranſlation of *Calvin*, renders it *Faults*, and *Faultineſs*. But, paſſing this, the very ſame Teſtimony from *Calvin* is objected unto the Diſſenters from the Church of *England* by Doctor *Stillingfleet*; and I may make the ſame Obſerve upon it, which Doctor *Owen* makes in his Reply to *Stillingfleet*, *Enq.* p. 287. "There is a great deal more belongs unto the pure Preaching of the Word, and the Adminiſtration of the Sacraments according unto Chriſt's Inſtitution, than ſome ſeem to apprehend; they may, they ought to be ſo explained, as that, from the Conſideration of them, we may juſtify our whole Cauſe: Both theſe may be wanting in a Church which is not guilty of ſuch hainous Errors in Doctrine, or Idolatry in Worſhip, as ſhould deſtroy its Being." I have ſaid what I reckon ſufficient concerning the above Characters which *Calvin* gives of a true Church, and therefore ſhall not here inſiſt upon them. But whereas our Author tells us from *Calvin*, That we are never to reject the Society of the Church as long as theſe remain, albeit otherwiſe it abound with many *Corruptions*, or rather, as the

* *Calv. Inſt. Lib. 4. Cap. 1. § 12.*

the Word should be rendered, with many *Faults* or *Blemishes*: Since *Calvin* explains himself in that same Place, in the Caution which he subjoins, and which our Author does not think fit to notice, I judge it deserves a Room here; *Hic autem patrocinari, &c. i. e.* "I would not have
 " it thought that I here intend to patronize Errors, even
 " the most minute, as if I judged that they should be che-
 " rished, either by Flattery or Connivance; but I say,
 " A Church is not to be rashly forsaken for any trifling
 " Differences, in which only that Doctrine is retained safe
 " and incorrupted, wherein the Safety of Godliness con-
 " sists, and the Use of Sacraments as appointed of the Lord
 " is preserved." And in this all the seceding Ministers will readily join him. This eminent Divine proceeds to lay the Argument in his following Sections against the *Anabaptists* in his Time, whom he compares to the antient *Cathari* and *Donatists*; and he charges them with inconsiderate Zeal, who departed from the Communion of the Church, and reckoned such to be no Churches at all, where they observed such Blemishes in the Walk and Conversation of Professors unsuitable unto their Christian Profession; and, having in very pathetick Terms bewailed the Unholiness of Professors, he adds, *Allegant Ecclesiam Christi sanctam esse, &c. i. e.* "They alledge that the Church
 " of Christ is holy; but, that they may also know that it is
 " mingled of good and evil Men, let them hear this Pa-
 " rable from the Mouth of Christ, wherein the Church
 " is compared to a Net, wherein Fishes of all Kinds are
 " gathered, and the Separation is not made till they are
 " brought unto the Shore; let them also hear, that the
 " Church is like a Field, wherein good Seed is sown,
 " but thro' the Fraud of the Enemy it is mixed with
 " Tares, from which it is not purged till at Harvest it is
 " brought into the Barn-floor. Finally, let them hear,
 " that it is like unto a Floor, wherein the Wheat is so ga-
 " thered together, that it lies hid under the Chaff, till it
 " is cleansed with Fan and Sive, and at length laid up in
 " the Garner." Likewise, in the other Citation given
 " us from *Calvin, Essay*, p. 41. He argues against the same Principles of the *Anabaptists*, and improves some Words from *Cyprian* against them, *viz.* "Let no Man challenge to
 " himself that which belongs to the Son of God only, to
 " be able alone to fan the Floor, and cleanse the Chaff,
 " &c."

As for our worthy Countrymen, Masters *Rutherford*, *Gillespie* and *Durham*, who wrote at the Time when the above Sectarian Principles were prevailing in *England*, and forcing a Way for themselves into *Scotland*; All the Reasonings of these eminent Men, in the Places alledged by our Author, are expressly laid against the above extravagant Principles. As for Instance, Mr. *Rutherford's Peaceable Plea*, cited *Essay*, p. 3, 41, 42, &c. This Book was wrote in Defence of the Doctrine of our reformed Divines anent Church-communion: And the Argument as it is managed by Mr. *Rutherford*, from the State of the Church of *Corinth*, cited *Essay*, p. 42. concludes in the following express Terms; "Then it is unlawful to separate from the pure Worship of God, because a Church is not constitute of visible Saints and a People all taught of God *." As Mr. *Rutherford* is here pleading against positive Signs of Regeneration as a necessary Qualification of Church-membership, so all the seceding Ministers join with him; but our Author thinks fit to set his Thumb upon the above Conclusion of Mr. *Rutherford's* Argument, otherwise his Reader might have easily perceived that Mr. *Rutherford's* Testimony is not in the least against the Principles or Conduct of the seceding Ministers. As for Mr. *Rutherford's Due Right*, cited *Essay*, p. 3, 9, 10, &c. This excellent Book (as our Author acknowledges, *Pref.* p. 8.) is writ against the *Independents*; and the Separation that Mr. *Rutherford* argues against, through that Book, is a Separation stated from Churches that are not constitute in the Manner I have just now mentioned: And therefore all our Author's Citations from that Book are nowise to the Purpose. The judicious Mr. *Durham* upon *Scandal* is likewise frequently cited, as *Essay* p. 19, 41, &c. particularly Part 2. Chap. 12. But in the Beginning of the said Chapter, when he states the Question, he tells us, That it is the same upon the Matter with that betwixt the ancient Church and the *Novatians* and *Donatists*; and all his Reasonings are against Separation on account of the personal Defects and Blemishes of Church-members, or upon a Supposition that such Persons as deserve Censure pollute the Ordinances to others: But in his third *Affertion*, in the Chapter cited, he acknowledges, that if the Office-bearers of the Church be defective in the Exercise of Discipline, and if this Defect "become scandalously excessive, it may give Occasion to them that are tender, to depart, and

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* *Peac. Plea*, p. 142.

“go where that Ordinance of Discipline is more vigorous.” And certainly, where the Defect is only in a particular Congregation, this may be a sufficient Relief for a tender Conscience: But, what shall be done when the Defect is scandalously excessive in a National Church? And that this is the State of Matters in the present Judicatories, I have already evinced: Therefore, according to the judicious Mr. *Durham*, we may depart from Communion with them; and, in this Case, we depart not from the Ordinances of Christ, but endeavour, in that Station wherein the Lord has placed us as Office-bearers in his House, to cleave to his Ordinances and Institutions, both Word, Sacraments and Discipline.

The Author of the *Essay* gives us likewise some Passages out of the Commentaries of the same judicious Divine on the *Revelation*, p. 4, 52, &c. particularly from his Observations upon the Church of *Thyatira*. From the very Words, as they are cited by our Author, it is plain that Mr. *Durham*’s Argument is laid against the Sectarian Separatists, viz. “Our Lord Jesus is no Approver nor Countenancer of Separation from a true Church, for the Faults of some Members in it; neither do Faults in some Members, and Defects in Ministers and Officers in executing Discipline, pollute the Ordinances in themselves, or to others, who are free of that Guilt.” And, after he has reasoned to good Purpose on this Head, he observes, “It must therefore be an untender Thing, to burden honest Souls with the Apprehension of being polluted from the personal Faults of joint Worshippers or Communicants.” And he subjoins several weighty Reasons and Grounds for the Proof of this. Our Author concludes from Mr. *Durham*’s Reasonings in this Part of his Commentaries, that “the Words of the judicious *Durham* are plain and pointed against Separation from any such Church as the Church of *Scotland* is, and hath been since the Revolution.” I must own, that I cannot see that the Words of the judicious *Durham* are either plain or pointed against Secession from the present Judicatories of this National Church: They are indeed plain and pointed against such who affirm that the personal Faults of joint Worshippers pollute the Ordinances in themselves and to others; and, as he manages the Argument from the State of the Church of *Thyatira* to excellent Purpose against these Principles, so he had good Reason to be plain and pointed against them, when Efforts were made, about the

Time when his Lectures were delivered, to introduce these Principles into the Church of *Scotland*; and when several Professors in *Aberdeen* did in a short Time declare themselves for them: But, tho' he is plain against these unscriptural Principles, yet his Argument is nowise directed against such who affirm, that Secession is warrantable and necessary from a particular visible Church, when in her Ecclesiastical Capacity she is carrying on a Course of Defection from Steps of Reformation once attained unto, and at the same Time refusing to be reclaimed. As I have laid the Argument for Secession from the present Judicatories, and for a Presbyterial Association for the Support and Defence of Truth, from the positive and particular Commands given to the Office-bearers of the Church of *Pergamos* and *Thyatira*, in the *Letter on Secession*; so the Reasonings of the judicious *Durham* are not in the least against the Argument as I have stated it: And, if I was to deal with the Sectarian Separatists, I would reason from the same Scriptures and in the very same Manner against them; and I wish that such who in our Day are in Danger of being ensnared into such Extremes, would seriously consider the weighty Reasonings of the forefaid eminent Divine.

Our Author, *Essay* p. 51. gives us a Citation from Mr. *Gillespie* *, viz. "Beware of separating new Lights; to separate from, or gather Churches out of the true reformed or reforming Churches, hath not the least Warrant from the Word of God, &c." I heartily join with Mr. *Gillespie*. I do think it very unwarrantable to depart from Communion with *true reformed or reforming Churches*; but surely our Author cannot reckon this National Church as she is represented in her present Judicatories a reforming Church, when he tells us, *Essay* p. 59. "I shall not say but the Church of *Scotland* may be worse at this Day than sometimes formerly, nor shall I say but that she hath been upon the *Decline* for some Time." If she is worse, if she is on the *Decline*, then surely she is not a reforming Church: But besides, if our Author had dealt fairly and plainly, he ought to have told his Reader who these new Lights are, that Mr. *Gillespie* cautions against; and, if we look to the Beginning of that Chapter whence the above Citation is taken, Mr. *Gillespie* observes, that "'Tis pleaded by some, who pretend to more Tenderness of Conscience than others, that to e-

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* *Miscel. Quest.* p. 123, 132.

“ stablish by the Law of the Land, a Confession of Faith,
 “ or a Directory of the Worship of God and of the Go-
 “ vernment of the Church, and to appoint Penalties or
 “ Punishments upon such as maintain the contrary Do-
 “ctrines or Practices, is to hold out and shut the Door
 “ upon new Light.” And, having likewise observed that
 the greatest Deceits have been brought into the World,
 under the Name or Notion of new Lights, he gives Ten
 excellent Directions and Cautions concerning these new
 Lights, amongst others the above Caution cited by our
 Author. ’Tis to be regreted, that such new Lights have
 of late appeared in our Horizon, who plead against the
 Establishment of Confessions of Faith, &c. by the Laws
 of the Land: If our Author had imployed his Pen against
 such *new Lights*, providing he had done it to purpose, he
 had thereby done more Service to our Reformation-rights,
 and our Presbyterian Interest, than he has done by his
Essay on Separation.

We have a large Quotation out of a Letter of Mr.
M’Ward’s to some of his Friends, *Essay* p. 53. wherein he
 warns them in patherick Terms against Separation, as also
 another Quotation from the *Hind-let-loose*; but I am wea-
 ried with pursuing our Author’s Quotations which are no-
 wise to the Purpose, and I fear I may weary my Reader
 likewise: If he will take the Trouble to read Mr.
M’Ward’s Earnest Contendings, with his Letter cited by
 our Author which is subjoined to the said Book, or the
Hind-let-loose, he will see with his own Eyes that they all
 militate against our Author; particularly, Mr. *M’Ward*
 in his Letter is expressly for Separation from the indulged
 Ministers, and, speaking of them, he saith, “ For all of
 “ us will grant that many of them are godly Men; but,
 “ alas! their Godliness, as it hath been pleaded, hath
 “ been of more Prejudice to the Work and Interest of
 “ of Christ, than the Ungodliness of all the Prelates and
 “ Curates.” And the Separation that Mr. *M’Ward* con-
 demns is a Separation that is not stated upon clear and
 just Grounds, and every such Separation ought to be con-
 demned. As for these worthy and great Men, Masters
Webster, Hog and Boston; the first two are very often men-
 tioned in the *Essay*; they all contended against the Defe-
 ctions of the Church-judicatories in a Way of Communion
 with them, and so did the seceding Brethren at the same
 Time, as I have observed in the Introduction: And I
 humbly

humbly judge that the Author of the *Essay* is too bold, if he intends, by the Quotations he brings from their Writings, to determine what their Conduct and Practice would have been, if they had lived till the present Times. I have already considered, in my printed Letter, his Quotation from Mr. *Boston*, *Essay* p. 57. As for that excellent Man Mr. *Webster*, it is well known how deeply he was affected with the Proceedings of the Judicatories in his own Time, especially with the Injury that Truth received by the slight Manner in which Mr. *Simson* was past by the Assembly 1717: But the Lord did in a short Time thereafter shut his Eyes, that he did not see the greater Evils that were a-coming. As for Mr. *Hog*, whose Letters are frequently mentioned by our Author, the last of them bears Date *April* 16th 1717; and his Postscript to this Letter is a sufficient Answer to all the Quotations that our Author brings from them, *viz.* "The preceeding Remarks relate to the circumstantiated Case of this Church, both now and before this Time, as it is formerly described." Therefore his Letters do not relate to the present circumstantiated Case of this National Church as I have already described it. He adds, "May we desire and hope, that a merciful Retriual shall further encourage Ministers and Members thereof to contend for the Faith in a regular and respectful Way without any further Breach, and that the present may at length be healed." But, alas! we have contended in a regular and respectful Way, by Petitions, Representations and otherwise; yet these regular Contendings have been despised by the Judicatories, and they have been so far from returning to the Lord, that some of the seceding Ministers have been thrust out from among them, merely on account of such regular Contendings; and others became sensible that they could not safely nor warrantably continue any longer in Communion with them.

The Author of the *Essay* reasons against what he calls Separation, from the Acts of the Church of *Scotland* in what (*says he*) hath been reckoned her best and purest Times, and from the Acts and Constitutions of foreign Churches; particularly, from the Act of Assembly *August* 9th 1643, whereby Ministers upon the Coast are enjoined to try and search for all Books tending to Separation: This Act did relate to the Books of Sectarian Separatists, who at this Time were very industrious in spreading their Writings. Likewise, our Author mentions another Act that

that same Year, of Date *August 15th*, "In which (*says*
 " *our Author*) the Assembly testify their unanimous Con-
 " sent against all Schism and Division, unto which these
 " Times, thro' the Working of *Satan* and his Instruments
 " against the Propagation of the Gospel of Peace, are so
 " inclined, &c." This Act of Assembly was an Act for
 preparing a Directory for the publick Worship of God,
 and for Unity and Uniformity in the same: Any who read
 that Act of Assembly, and who shall compare it with our
 Author's Quotation, will see that he has curtailed it in such
 a Manner, that his Reader cannot perceive the genuine
 Sense, Import and Design of it. The Act is laid against
 such Scandals and Divisions, and the very Beginnings of
 them, which were contrary to the Work of Reformation;
 and therefore, till a Directory for Worship, should be
 prepared, the Assembly prohibits and discharges the
 " condemning one of another in such lawful Things as
 " have been universally received, and by perpetual Custom
 " practised, by the most faithful Ministers of the Gospel
 " and Opposers of Corruptions in this Kirk, since the first
 " Beginning of Reformation to these Times." If the
 present Judicatories had followed the Example of this and
 other Assemblies of that Period, the lamentable Grounds
 of our Secession from them had never taken Place.

Our Author likewise, p. 46. mentions the Act of Assem-
 bly 1647, intituled, *Act against such as withdraw them-*
selves from the publick Worship in their own Congregations.
 " In this Act (*says he*) for preserving Order, Unity and
 " Peace in the Kirk, and for preventing of Schism, they
 " enjoined every Member in every Congregation to keep their
 " own Parish-kirk, communicating there in Word and
 " Sacrament." This Act is frequently thrown up by our
 Author, with very indecent Insinuations against it. I shall
 in this Place offer what I intend for the vindicating and
 clearing of it. The Preamble to the Act declares the
 End and Design of it, *viz.* for preserving Order, Unity,
 &c. and for preventing Schism. I once designed to have
 given a more large Account of the Nature of Schism in
 a Section by itself; but, finding that this Book swells upon
 my Hand, I shall forbear it: Only, I must here observe,
 that we find the Word *Schism* used several Times by the
 Apostle in his first Epistle to the *Corinthians*, as Chap. i.
 10. Now I beseech you, Brethren, — and that there be no
 Divisions among you. The Word *Divisions* is in the Ori-
 ginal *Schisms*, Chap. xi. 18. I hear that there be *Divisions*
 among

among you, or SCHISMS. And if we enquire, What were these Schisms that were in the Church of *Corinth*? I answer, They were Divisions, Differences and Janglings amongst the Members of that Church, who still remained joined together in external Church-communion, or in the same Church Order, Discipline and Worship: The Apostle gives a particular Instance of their Divisions and Janglings, 1 *Cor.* i. 12. and iii. 4. One said, *I am of Paul*; another, *I am of Apollos*. There was a Siding amongst them about their Ministers and Teachers, who held the same Testimony of Jesus. And here I observe, that the Spirit of God in the holy Scriptures calls it *Schism*, when the Members of a particular organical Church put a Difference amongst their faithful Ministers and Teachers, who are holding the same Testimony of the Lord Jesus: As this is *Schism* in the Scripture-sense of the Word, so it ought to be condemned in all the Churches of Christ; and this is that Schism and Separation testified against by the above Act of the Assembly 1647. Our Author, when speaking of it, p. 95. tells us, "That *many think* there wanted not a great deal of Tyranny in that Act of Assembly 1647, &c." But, whatever he or others may think, there wanted not a great deal of Scripture-reason in it; in regard that all the Ministers of the Church of *Scotland* were at that Time holding the same Testimony against Popery, Prelacy, Erastianism and Sectarianism: They were, in their judicative Capacity, asserting and maintaining the covenanted Doctrine, Worship, Government and Discipline of the House of God in this Land, in Opposition to every Thing contrary to sound Doctrine and the Power of Godliness; the Confession of Faith compiled at *Westminster* was received and approved by this Assembly: And the Introduction to the Act our Author inveighs against runs in the following Manner; "Since it hath pleased God of his infinite Goodness to bless his Kirk within this Nation with the Riches of the Gospel, in giving to us his Ordinances in great Purity, Liberty, and withal a comely and well-established Order." If these Things are considered, it is plain that the *Schism* condemned by this Assembly is that which the Scripture calls *Schism*, namely, a separating from such Ministers as are holding the same Testimony of Jesus. But this will further appear, if we consider the Means that are enjoined by this Assembly for preventing *Schism*; and these are of two Sorts, the first concerns Ministers themselves, and the other concerns the People.

People. Our Author thinks fit to report what concerns the People, and, after his partial Manner, he conceals the first Mean that is laid down by this faithful Assembly, “ for preserving Order, Unity and Peace in the Kirk, “ and for maintaining that Respect which is due to the “ Ordinances and Ministers of Jesus Christ, for preventing Schism, noisom Errors, &c.” But, tho’ he thinks fit to omit what is enjoined Ministers for attaining the above valuable Ends, I think it very necessary to transcribe it, *viz.* The Assembly “ doth charge every Minister to be “ diligent in fulfilling his Ministry, to be holy and grave “ in his Conversation, to be faithful in Preaching, declaring the whole Counsel of God, and, as he hath Occasion from the Text of Scripture, to reprove the Sins “ and Errors, and press the Duties of the Time; and in “ all these to observe the Rules prescribed by the Assembly: Wherein if he be negligent, he is to be censured “ by his own Presbytery.” Therefore this Act of Assembly obliges Ministers and People to their mutual relative Duties; and, in order to prevent *Schism*, it enjoins not only every Member in every Congregation to attend the Ministry of his own Pastor, but it likewise enjoins every Minister in every Congregation to be a faithful Steward of the Mysteries of God. Hence I think it very evident, that the Separation condemned by this faithful Assembly, is a Separation from such Ministers who are holding the Testimony of Jesus delivered to his Church and People in this Land.

As for his Quotations from the Discipline of the famous Church of *France*, and from the Confession of Faith of the Churches of *Helvetia*, the Reader may see, from what I have said, how little they make for his Purpose. As for that Act of Union past in the National Synod of *Privas* in the Year 1612, the long Quotation which our Author gives from that Act contains many pathetick Expressions for Union; and the Occasion of passing this Act, according to our Author, was, That at this Time there were Dissenters in that Church; but he has not told us who these Dissenters were, nor upon what Principles they dissented: But, if the Reader would be satisfied about these, he may see what the Publisher of the Acts, &c. of the famous Church of *France*, in his Introduction, § 14. says upon this Head, *viz.* “ There arose a Combination of Men, “ such as *Morlas*, &c. who were for accommodating and “ reconciling the two Religions, (i. e. *the Popish and Pro-*
“ *testant*”

“ *testant*) and these were put upon it by the Bribes and
 “ Pensions of the *Romish* Clergy, and Promises of great
 “ Preferment. — The National Synods of *Saumur* and
 “ *Privas*, &c. did what they could to stem the Current.”
 Such as were promoting a *Syncretism* or Coalition with
Rome, were the Persons against whom the foresaid Synod of
Privas expresses themselves in such a pathetick Manner, in
 the Quotation given us by our Author.

I shall only further notice his Quotation from the Plat-
 form of Church-discipline of the Churches of *New-England*.
 Here he gives us a long Quotation from Chap. 14. § 8,
 9. but it is after our Author’s partial Manner, he stops when
 he comes to any Thing that he thinks may make against
 him: And therefore, after our Author’s long Citation
 concerning maintaining Communion with a Church in the
 Participation of the Sacraments when scandalous Persons
 are tolerate in the Church, it is added, “ If the Church
 “ cannot be reformed, they (*viz. such as are grieved with*
 “ *the tolerating of scandalous Persons*) may use their Liber-
 “ ty, as is specified, Chap. 13. § 4.” I know not if our
 Author does approve of every Thing that is contained in
 the above Platform; but, if he does, he cannot condemn
 our Secession from the present Judicatories upon the Prin-
 ciples that are laid down in the said Platform.

Our Author proceeds, p. 59. to tell his Reader, that
 “ Separation is an Evil against which God hath often testi-
 “ fied his Displeasure, by separating Separatists from one
 “ another, and giving them up to gross Errors: This (*says*
 “ *he*) with other Arguments, may have Weight to make us
 “ guard against it.” The Instances that he gives us are, one
 Mr. *Johnston* a rigid *Brownist*, and one Mr. *Roger Wil-*
liams, who disturbed the Churches in *New-England*. He
 mentions one of Mr. *Williams*’s Principles, *viz.* That he re-
 fused to communicate with the Church of *Boston*, because
 they would not make a publick and solemn Declaration of
 Repentance for their having communicated with the Church
 of *England*, while they were in the Realm thereof: But,
 how comes our Author to conceal his other Principle men-
 tioned by Mr. *Mather* in the Place quoted by him, *viz.*
his violent urging, that the Civil Magistrate might not punish
Breaches of the first Table in the Laws of the Ten Command-
ments? Our Author has no doubt his own Reasons for not
 mentioning this Sectarian Principle, maintained by the
 said *Williams*; however, according to Mr. *Mather* in his

History *, the above Principle bred as much Disturbance in *New-England* as that which our Author mentions. Our Author likewise gives us an Example in our own Land, p. 61. of Separatists falling from Truth to Error, “ particularly in the Case of some eminent Professors in *Aberdeen*; as (*says he*) is to be seen in the Postscript to Mr. *Rutherford's* Letters.” But, why does not our Author give us some Instances of the Lord’s testifying his Displeasure against such as have run into the other Extreme; namely, such who have once made a fair Profession of Regard unto the Order, Government and Discipline of the covenanted Church of *Scotland*, and who have afterwards apostatized from the same; or, who have put to their Hands to pull down and destroy what once they seemed to be building? I join with our Author when he says, “ Tho’ Providence alone is not to be our Rule, yet the Lord’s Doings and the Operations of his Hands are to be regarded.” And I add, We ought to be very cautious and tender in making particular Application of Divine Providences: But since the grave Author of the *Fulfilling of the Scriptures* has given some particular Instances of such in our own Land, who have turned Opposers of the Truth which once they professed, and against whom a Righteous Lord has testified his Displeasure †, I may venture to report them. The Instances he gives are of Masters *James Nicolson*, *William Couper*, *Andrew Forester* and Mr. *Patrick Adamson*, with others, some of whom died in great Horror of Conscience: And, concerning the last I have named, he tells us, He “ was once a Preacher of great Repute; but, being swayed by Ambition and private Interest, he insinuated himself into King *James's* Favour, and made it his Work to overturn the established Government and Discipline of the Church: At length, he got himself into the Archbishoprick of *St. Andrews*; and, in the Height of his Power, he used to boast of three Things, that he said could not fail him; his Riches, the King’s Favour, and his Learning: But, a short Time thereafter, he was forced to get Charity from these Ministers whom he had persecuted; and, as for the King’s Favour, he was despised and abhorred by him; and, with respect to his Learning in which he did also boast, his Parts did so far wither and dry up, that, in seeking a Blessing on his Meat, he could scarce

“ speak

* Book 7. p. 7.

† *Fulfil. Script.* p. m. 406, 407, &c.

“ speak a few Words to Sense, tho’ once admired for his Eloquence.” These, and the like Instances, may be Warnings both to our Author and to us every one, *not to be high-minded, but to fear*; and to remember that Word of the Lord, *Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.*

S E C T. III.

Wherein the Argument against Secession from the present Judicatories, from the Conduct of faithful Ministers betwixt 1597 and 1638, is examined.

AS the Author of the *Essay* accuses the seceding Brethren of unwarrantable Separation, and of a dangerous Schism; so he spends some Pages in persuading his Reader that their Conduct is unprecedented, and that they follow not the Footsteps of our worthy Ancestors betwixt 1596 and 1638. I cannot propose to transcribe his long Reasonings upon this Head, p. 12, 13, 14; 15. and what is thrown up upon the Subject frequently through the *Essay*: I shall endeavour to lay down his Argument in its full Force and Strength, and I have no Inclination or Design to overlook any Thing of Weight that is offered by our Author. The Substance of his Reasoning is as follows; “ A Course of Defection and “ Backsliding was carried on betwixt 1596 and 1638, “ after that the Church of *Scotland* had attained to a high “ Pitch in Reformation; yet, tho’ for upwards of forty “ Years her Defections were lamentable, and far more “ grievous than can be pretended at this Day, our worthy “ Ancestors continued in the Church, struggling against “ her Defections, without making Secession or Separation; they contended against the said Defections, without erecting themselves into different Judicatories, or “ any Thing like Separation. He observes, that in their “ *Act and Testimony*, p. 13. the seceding Ministers affirm, “ That, during this Period of grievous Sinning and Back- “ sliding, there were several eminent Men who witnessed “ against the same, &c.” Upon this says our Author, p. 13. “ How did these several eminent Men witness against “ the grievous Sinning and Backsliding of their Day?” He subjoins, “ Was it not in a Way of Church-communion?” As the above is the Substance of our Author’s

Argument, so I shall now examine how he confirms and illustrates the same. And here I humbly judge two Things must be enquired into; *First*, Whether or not, during the fore said Period, the Church of *Scotland* did in her Ecclesiastical or Judicative Capacity carry on a Course of Defection and Backsliding? *Secondly*, Whether or not all such as witnessed against the Course of Backsliding continued to contend in a Way of Communion with the backsliding Party? I am heartily sorry that I shall have so frequent Ground, upon both these Heads, to say concerning one of our Author's Profession and Character, That, instead of shewing what was the Practice of our worthy Ancestors during the Period mentioned, he has very much misrepresented the same; and, instead of narrating Matters of Fact, he has advanced several Things that are neither Truth nor Matter of Fact: I shall be far from saying he has done this deliberately, but I humbly judge he has not duly considered the History of this Period of our Church.

With respect to the first of these, our Author seems to me peremptorily to determine, that the Church of *Scotland* in her judicative Capacity carried on a Course of Defection and Backsliding: He asserts, p. 14. " That the Kirk took Vote in *Parliament*, and constant *Modetrators*." But, before I proceed upon this Head, it is necessary to acquaint the Reader, that when our Author writes, p. 12. in *Italick*, *That in the Year 1596, according to Calderwood, our sincere General Assemblies ended*; I say, it is needful that the Reader should know, that, from the Year 1602 to 1638, there was not a *General Assembly* of the Church of *Scotland*, except one at *Aberdeen Anno 1605*: There were indeed six pack'd Meetings of Ministers, Noblemen and Gentlemen, viz. two at *Linlithgow*, and four at *Aberdeen, Glasgow, St. Andrews* and *Perth*, who assumed to themselves the Name and Authority of General Assemblies, and under that Name carried on a Course of Defection; but these Meetings were never acknowledged as General Assemblies of the Church of *Scotland*, by the faithful Ministers of that Period; and they were all condemned as pretended Assemblies, by the first free and lawful General Assembly that met at *Glasgow Anno 1638*: Neither was the Authority or Constitution of these Assemblies ever acknowledged by the most Part of Presbyteries in *Scotland*, as we may afterwards see. As for the Assembly at *Aberdeen Anno 1605*, tho' the Ministers

Ministers that met there did nothing but constitute and appoint the Diet of another Assembly, yet it was acknowledged and defended as a lawful Assembly by the honest Ministers in that Period, and Mr. *James Melvill* wrote an excellent Apology for the said Assembly *. It is also well known what Hardships several great Men who were Members of that Assembly suffered on account of the Testimony they gave when they constitute the said Assembly in Name of the Lord Jesus, and appointed the Diet of the next Assembly, notwithstanding of the Opposition that was made unto them by the Laird of *Law-risfoun* the King's Commissioner. Masters *Welsh*, *Forbes* and others were imprisoned, prosecuted as Criminals, and six of them were banished; and besides, from the Year 1596 to 1602, the Church of *Scotland* had not any Assembly which was accounted a free and lawful Assembly by the honest Ministers of that Period: Therefore, when our Author tells his Reader, that in the Year 1596 *our sincere General Assemblies ended*, if he had dealt in a fair and candid Manner, he ought also to have told us, that from the Year 1602 to 1638, that is, for about the Space of 36 Years, the Church of *Scotland* had not a General Assembly whose Authority and Constitution was owned by honest Ministers and Presbyteries in that Period, except the Assembly of *Aberdeen* 1605; he ought likewise to have told, that from the Year 1596 to 1638, that is, about the Space of 41 Years, the Church of *Scotland* had not a General Assembly which was reckoned by the witnessing Ministers in that Period to be a free and lawful Assembly. But it is needful that I give some more particular Evidences, that the Course of Defection during this Period was not carried on by the Church of *Scotland* in her judicative Capacity.

King *James VI.* having formed a Design to introduce Prelacy into the Church of *Scotland*, he gained some corrupt Churchmen to his Side, whom he made use of as Tools for promoting his Designs. And the first direct Step that was taken by the Court, towards the Subversion of the Order and Discipline of this Church, was the bringing in some Ministers to vote in Parliament: And, in order to this, a Commission of the General Assembly Anno 1597, consisting only of Fourteen Ministers, whereof Seven were a *Quorum*, gave in a Petition to the Parliament in Name of the Kirk for Ministers to vote in Parlia-
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* *Gald. Hist.* p. 506.

ment *; this was done without any Authority, Commission or Instruction from the General Assembly : And when the General Assembly met thereafter at *Dundee*, *Calderwood* tells us ||, that "the Number that carried for Ministers voting in Parliament were not such as laboured in the Word, but others wanting Commission ; and that, notwithstanding of their Help, and the King's Authority bewraying himself a plain Party, they exceeded the sincerer Sort only by Ten Votes." At the Down-sitting of this Assembly, Mr. *Andrew Melvill* and Mr. *John Johnston* Professors in *St. Andrews*, tho' Members of the Assembly, were charged to depart out of the Town under Pain of Horning. When this Assembly was overawed, when Members that had Right to vote were debarred from it, when such as had no Commission from Presbyteries voted, worthy Mr. *Davidson* had just Ground to protest, as he did, against the foresaid Assembly, as not having the Freedom due to a free General Assembly ; after which Protestation he left the Assembly, and many Ministers following subscribed the same. From all which it is evident, that the Affair of Ministers voting in Parliament had not the Authority of a free and lawful General Assembly of the Church of *Scotland*, and consequently was not the Deed of the Church of *Scotland* in her judicative Capacity. As for the Assembly that met at *Montrose* Anno 1600, where the *Cautions* were voted, for such Ministers as had Vote in Parliament, against their attempting any Thing contrary to the Order and Discipline of this Church ; it is a just Observe of the Assembly 1638, in their Act against the Civil Places and Power of Kirkmen, "That the Act of the said Assembly holden at *Montrose* 1600, anent Ministers voting in Parliament, being pressed by Authority, did rather for an *Interim* tolerate the same, and that limited by many Cautions, than in Freedom of Judgment allow thereof." And, besides, it is obvious from the Account that *Calderwood* gives of the said Assembly at *Montrose*, that it was neither a free nor lawful Assembly of the Church of *Scotland*.

The next Step taken by the Court, towards the introducing of Prelacy, was the setting up of constant Moderators in Synods and Presbyteries ; but, before this Step is taken, eight eminent Ministers, who had considerable Weight in the Judicatories, were taken up by the King's Authority to *London*. That great Man, Mr. *John Welsh*,
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* *Cald. Hist.* p. 412. || *Ibidem*, p. 416, 419, 420.

with five others are banished ; several faithful Ministers are imprisoned and confined, upon one Pretext or another : Yet, after all, the Court durst not venture the Matter of constant Moderators to the Determination of a free Assembly ; therefore a Meeting of Ministers, with a considerable Number of Noblemen and Barons, all nominate by the King, is called at *Linlithgow Anno 1606* ; at this Convention it is appointed, that constant Moderators should be admitted in every Presbytery : But, when the *Linlithgow Act* came down refined from the Court, a Clause is found in it appointing constant Moderators in Synods likewise * ; and all Synods and Presbyteries were charged, under Pain of Rebellion, to admit the constant Moderators. But, how were the Acts of the above pretended Assembly received ? *Calderwood* says, “ Some obeyed willingly ; others yielded for Fear ; some refused *simpliciter* ; some took Instruments, that, if the Person appointed should enter unto that Office, it was violent Dealing and without their Consents.” The *Hindlet-loose*, p. 51. says, Many Presbyteries refused resolutely. The *Latin Historian* || says, “ Some of the Ministers, being forced under Pain of Rebellion, did submit to the Act past at *Linlithgow*, but under Condition that the Matter should be more fully examined in a free General Assembly.” As for the Provincial Synods, none of them accepted the constant Moderator except the Synod of *Angus* †. *Calderwood* gives some particular Instances of the faithful Behaviour of Synods in Opposition to all the violent Threats of the Court, and amongst others of the Synod of *Perth* : Lord *Scoon* came with a Commission from the King to that Synod at their Meeting *April 1607* ; he threatened them in the King’s Name if they would not except of a constant Moderator : But, notwithstanding of all his Threats and most outrageous Insults, their last Moderator *Mr. Row* took the Roll of the Synod in his own Hand ; and, when *Scoon* would have pulled it out of his Hand, he held the Synod-roll in the one, and Lord *Scoon* with the other Hand, and called all the Names of the Members, who chused their Moderator according to the Form and Order of the Church of *Scotland*. When the new Moderator was chosen, he began with Prayer according to the Custom of Judicatories at that Time : *Scoon* raged in a profane Manner in Time of Prayer, and threw
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* *Cald. Hist.* p. 554, 555,—564. || *Hist. Mot.* p. 12.

† *Cald. Hist.* p. 569, 572.

the Table, about which some of them were kneeling, over upon them ; but they continued in Prayer, and never stirred. Lord *Scoon*, being also Provost of the Town, called for the Baillies, and commanded them to ring the common Bell, and dismiss these Rebels ; but the Baillies honestly declined yielding Obedience to him. When they returned to the next Diet of the same Synod, they found the Church-doors shut : Some of the Town-council went to crave the Keys from Lord *Scoon* the Provost, but in vain ; the Baillies offered to make patent Doors, but this the Ministers refused, and they choosed rather to meet at the South Church-door, in the Midst of a great Concourse of People, who accompanied them with Tears, and brought Tables and Seats for them. And, after the Synod was constitute, they enquired what Presbyteries in their Bounds had accepted of the constant Moderators appointed by the Meeting at *Linlithgow* ; and none were found but the Presbytery of *Perth*, who reported to the Synod, that he had entred the Chair by Violence, as their Protestation taken in Presbytery did bear ; and in the mean Time declared themselves willing to submit to Censure. The Synod made an Act, That every Presbytery, at their first Meeting after the Synod, should choose their own Moderator according to the common Order. I have only given a short Hint of what is more fully recorded by *Calderwood* *, that the Reader may see that the Judicatories of the Church of *Scotland* were at this Time contending with great Faithfulness and Zeal for their just Rights and Privileges, in Opposition unto the greatest Violence : And, from what I have observed, the Reader may likewise see, that constant Moderators were forced upon Synods and Presbyteries ; and that the Church of *Scotland* in her judicative Capacity was so far from giving her Consent unto them, that she wrestled with great Zeal against this Imposition : Hence, as Matters were then stated, there was not the least Ground of Secession from any such Judicatories. And when, at the Meeting of Parliament the same Year, Bishops were advanced to Civil Dignities, tho' no Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction was given them, the Commissioners from the several Presbyteries through *Scotland*, being met at *Edinburgh*, gave in a Protestation against the same, in the Name of the Church in general, and in Name of their Presbyteries from which they had Commission †.

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* *Cald. Hist.* p. 566, &c. † *Ibid. Hist.* p. 527. *Apol. Relat.* p. 34.

From all which it appears, that it is so far from being Matter of Fact (as the Author of the *Essay* reports) that the Kirk took Vote in Parliament and constant Moderators, that on the contrary the Church of Scotland did then, in her judicative Capacity, with great Zeal and Faithfulness oppose the same.

Tho' the above-mentioned Steps were taken in order to the rearing up of Prelacy, and tho', as *Calderwood* observes *, "the chief Opposites unto this Course were either banished, warded or confined; yet the Court durst not venture upon a free Election amongst the Remanent of the Ministry." Therefore, when a General Assembly is indicted at *Glasgow Anno 1610*, all the Members are nominate by the King; at this pretended Assembly the Bishops are appointed constant Moderators of Synods, and a Negative was given them over Synods and Presbyteries. *Calderwood* makes the following Observation concerning Episcopacy as it was introduced by the foresaid Assembly †; "There was no Mention made in the Assembly of *Glasgow* of the Consecration of Bishops: For, howbeit the unhappy Pack there convened tied Presbyteries and Synods unto them in the Cases expressed; yet meant they not to determine, that there was a distinct Office in the Word, differing from the Office of a Minister: For by the Bishop of the Diocese, in the Act of *Glasgow*, is not meant a Bishop by Office, but only a simple Minister, so stiled in the preceeding Assembly, and that vulgarly, in respect of his great Benefice of Bishoprick." As the Members of the foresaid pretended Assembly were all nominate by the King, so there were none of the honest Part of the Ministry present; and, as *Calderwood* reports, neither was it convenient that they should mix with them, Hist. p. 623. Again, the five Articles of *Perth*, whereby some of the *English* Ceremonies were brought into Scotland, were concluded by a Meeting at *Perth* usurping the Name and Authority of a General Assembly, but testified against by the Bulk and Body of Ministers and Professors through the Land. From what is above observed, we may see a vast Difference betwixt the Conduct of Judicatories during the Period before 1638, and the Practice of the present Judicatories: As for Instance, The Course of Defection, from the Year 1596 and downward, was carried on by Threatnings, and manifold Acts of Force and Violence from the Civil Powers; but the Course of

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* *Calderwood's Hist.* p. 612. † *Ibid.* P. 644.

Defection is carried on at present by the Judicatories themselves, our Ruin is from ourselves; there is no Violence nor Force done the Judicatories, they are not terrified with Threatnings, they walk readily and willingly in their present backsliding Course and Way. Again, the above-mentioned Course of Defection was carried on by packed Meetings of some corrupt Ministers, with Noblemen and Gentlemen, who usurped the Name and Authority of a General Assembly; when, as Mr. *Forester* observes ||, the true Representatives or lawful Assemblies of the Church of *Scotland* never consented to the said Course of Defection: The Cry of Ministers and Presbyteries during that Period was for a free and lawful General Assembly, consisting of Members chosen according to the Form and Order prescribed by the Church of *Scotland*; but this they could not obtain till the memorable 1638, when the Lord turned back the Captivity of his People: But the present Course of Defection is carried on by General Assemblies, consisting of Members chosen after the usual Manner by Presbyteries. From all which it is evident, that the present Course of Defection is carried on by the present Judicatories of this National Church in their Ecclesiastical or Judicative Capacity, and who in the same Capacity are *willingly walking after the Commandments* of Men; whereas the Course of Defection, from 1596 to 1638, was carried on by outward Violence and Force from the secular Powers, and by pretended Assemblies, in Opposition unto the Contendings, not of Ministers only, but also of the proper Judicatories of the Church of *Scotland*.

The next Thing that I am to enquire into is, If such as faithfully witnessed against the Course of Defection, during the above-mentioned Period, did contend in a Way of Church-communion with the corrupt Party; or, if they contended in a Way of Secession from them? The Author of the *Essay* is very peremptory and positive, as we have heard, that they all contended in a Way of Church-communion; but in this he misrepresents their Conduct and Procedure, and in several particular Instances he asserts what is neither Truth nor Matter of Fact: It is therefore needful, that upon this Head I give some particular Instances of Secession from the corrupt Party that were carrying on at this Time a Course of Defection; and, from the Practice and declared Sentiments of some eminent Ministers that I shall name, I hope to make it evident, that

that their Contending was not always in a Way of Church-communion with the corrupt Party, or with their corrupt Judicatories, as the Author of the *Essay* positively determines. And, for clearing this Head, I may observe in the *first* Place, That many Presbyteries, as well as particular Ministers, expressly disowned the Authority and Constitution of the several pretended Assemblies in that Period, as also they refused Obedience to their Acts: Many Presbyteries, as I have narrated above, never admitted of the constant Moderators appointed by the pretended Assembly at *Linlithgow* 1606; and, when the five Articles were past by the pretended Assembly at *Perth*, the most Part of Presbyteries, as well as particular Ministers, refused to acknowledge the Authority of that Assembly, or to yield Obedience to its Acts and Constitutions. Any that read *Calderwood's* History may see what Numbers of Ministers were suspended, deprived and confined, for refusing Obedience to the Acts of the said Assembly, and for their disowning it as a pretended and unlawful Assembly: The Prelatick Party, who were going alongst with the Court-measures, durst not venture the Cause of such Ministers to be tried by their Presbyteries; and therefore a Court called the *High Commission* was erected by the King's sole Authority, and by this Court the above Sentences were past against them. And when the Parliament met *Anno* 1621, where the Articles of *Perth* were ratified, a great Body of the Ministry convened at *Edinburgh*, and agreed upon a solemn Protestation against the usurped Government of the Bishops and the Articles of *Perth*; but, being charged by Proclamation to depart out of the Town, they leave an Information and Admonition behind them, to be put into the Hands of the Members of Parliament, wherein they condemn the Meeting at *Perth* as an unlawful Assembly, and their Proceedings as null and void: They likewise agreed upon a solemn Protestation against the usurped Government of the Bishops and the Ceremonies, to be given in to the Parliament, in case they should ratify the *Perth* Articles. This Protestation was signed by one of their Number in Name of the rest, whom they impowered to give it in to the Parliament; but, when he could not get Access into the Parliament-house, he affixed a Copy of the said Protestation on the Cross and other publick Places, taking Instruments in the usual Manner when the Act of Parliament ratifying *Perth* Articles was published *. *Cal-*

derwood likewise reports, That the greatest Part of the best-qualified Ministers through the Land, and of the most zealous Professors, refused the Authority and Constitution of *Perth* Assembly. Also, a Paper before me, intituled, *A short Relation of the State of the Kirk of Scotland, since the Reformation of Religion unto the present Time, for Information and Advertisement to our Brethren in the Kirk of England, &c.* published Anno 1638, bears, " That the
 " most religious and judicious of the Ministry did solemnly
 " protest in Name of the reformed Kirk of *Scotland* against
 " the Ratification of the Articles of *Perth* in Parliament;
 " whereunto the *most Part* of the particular Congrega-
 " tions have adhered, and never practised these Articles." Upon what I have now observed, I may enquire at the Author of the *Essay*, Whether or not, if Presbyteries, Ministers and Professors, should not only refuse to give Obedience to the Acts of the present National Assemblies, but likewise disown their Authority and Constitution; Would not such Presbyteries be reckoned seceding Presbyteries, and would not such Ministers and Professors in like Manner be reckoned Seceders? And, in this very Period, the Charge of Schism and Separation was laid against these faithful Ministers, who disowned the Authority of the pretended Assemblies of the said Period. When this Charge was laid against that zealous Minister, Mr. *John Scrimger* Minister at *Kinghorn*, before the High Commission Court, he replied, " As for my keeping a
 " Schism, ye do wrong to alledge so, ye shall not be able
 " to quit yourselves of it; we walked all soundly in the
 " Truth, ye have leaped from us, ye make Schisms *." Before I give Instances of the Sentiments and Practice of some eminent Ministers during this Period, I must take notice of what is affirmed by our Author, p. 14. " Yea
 " (*says he*) in former Times of great Defections, worthy
 " Ministers were so far from thinking it Duty to separate
 " and erect themselves in separate Judicatories, that, when
 " Court and Kirk would had them forsake these Judica-
 " tories, they still attended, and opposed sinful Measures
 " taken in them at that Time." And he mentions two that were discharged by the Court to go to the Judicatories in the Year 1607, viz. Mr. *John Carmichaell*, and Mr. *Henry Livingston*, who was confined to his own Parish upon the account of the Proceedings at *Perth* Synod above-mentioned. But our Author might have known, that the
 proper

* *Cald. Hist.* p. 747.

proper Judicatories of the Church of *Scotland* were then contending for their just Rights and Privileges, in Opposition to Oppression and Violence from the Court: It is true, that, at that Time, the Court confined many worthy Ministers, and discharged them to attend upon Presbyteries and Synods, with a Design to carry on the Cause of Episcopacy; and it was the Duty of Ministers to attend upon the proper Judicatories, in order to testify and witness against the Encroachments that were made upon them; an Instance of which I have given in the faithful Behaviour of the Synod of *Perth* and *Stirling*. And I must also here observe, that our Author is mistaken, when he affirms that the Kirk at this Time, would have worthy Ministers forsake these Judicatories: He can give no Instances of this from any Ecclesiastical Judiciary at that Time in Being; the two Instances above-mentioned do only prove that the Court would have had them forsake the Judicatories. But, tho' Ministers attended the Judicatories before the pretended Assembly at *Glasgow* 1610, yet the Case altered very much, when the said Assembly appointed Bishops to preside in Synods, and gave them a Negative over them: Then many honest Ministers refused to attend the said Synods; and the said pretended Assembly, judging it would be so, did enact, "That whatsoever Minister, without just Cause and lawful Excuse made, shall absent himself from the Visitation or the Diocesan Assembly, he shall be suspended from his Office and Benefice, and, if he amend not, shall be deprived †." And this made many Ministers obnoxious to the High Commission Court, who (as *Calderwood* observes) put in Execution the Acts of Assemblies overruled by the Bishops, in regard they knew very well that they would not get the Concurrence of the ordinary Judicatories of the Church. After the said pretended Assembly, Synods became very unfrequent, many honest Ministers had no Freedom to be present at them. I shall not weary the Reader with many particular Instances; only, he may take one amongst many, and that is of Mr. *David Calderwood*, who (according to our Author, *Essay* p. 178.) contended in a Way of Church-communion betwixt 1610 and 1638. I find that this great Man reports, that, at a Conference he had with some of the Bishops, they urged him to repair to the Synods; and the Bishop of *Gairthness* said to him, "Come and say, *Hic sum*, (i. e. *I am here*) and then do as you please." To which Mr.

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Calderwood replied, " That *hic sum*, or, *I am here*, is the " Question ‡;" and he gives some weighty Reasons why he could not be present at Synods. I hope that the Reader will be satisfied, that this is an Instance of a considerable Minister, who declined to contend in a Way of Church-communion with the backsliding Party. I shall likewise give him the Judgment, upon this Head, of one who was reckoned amongst the most eminent Ministers of the Church of Scotland, viz. Mr. *John Welsh*, who in a Letter directed to Mr. *Robert Bruce*, after charging the Bishops with Perfidy and Apostasy, &c. concludes, " Therefore they are not to be heard any more, either " in Publick, or in Consistories, Colleges or Synods; for, " what Fellowship hath Light with Darknes †?" What can be more plain for Secession from the corrupt Party in that Period? Yet our Author has the Assurance to say, *Essay* p. 12. " That our worthy Ancestors, from the Year " 1596, continued in the Church without making Secession " or Separation, tho' still they struggled against her De- " fections." And, amongst other worthy Men, he names Masters *David Calderwood* and *John Welsh*. Likewise, the same Mr. *Welsh* was imprisoned on account of his being at the Assembly at *Aberdeen*, and also banished in the Year 1606; and as he never returned again to *Scotland*, so he never joined in Communion with any of the corrupt Party, or with their corrupt Judicatories. I shall here likewise subjoin the Judgment of that great Man, Mr. *James Melvill*, concerning the Manner after which he thought the Lord's Witnesses in that Period should have testified, as it lies in a Letter he sends from *England* directed to one of his confined Brethren in *Scotland**, where I find the following Words; " Alas, if that Spirit " of Action, Zeal and Courage, that sometimes did mightily reign in our Kirk, were kindled up again, that " might make a few from every Presbytery and Province " to convene together in the Name of Christ, and censure these Corrupters of the Kirk to the uttermost." In which Words, this eminent Minister gives his Judgment in a very pathetick Manner, not only for Secession from the corrupt Party at that Time, but also for meeting together in a distinct judicative Capacity from them, in order to censure them on account of their Corruptions; yea, he declares it to be the Duty even of a few, to exercise the Key of Discipline in censuring the corrupt Party.

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After our Author has named the eight Ministers, who were called up to *London* and detained there, that in their Absence the Episcopal Cause might be advanced, he adds, " They did not separate, tho' then constant Moderators, " *Vote in Parliament by the Kirk, and Bishops* were brought in." But our Author might have known, that these eminent Ministers were taken up to *London* before either constant Moderators or Bishops were brought in; and two of them, viz. Masters *Andrew* and *James Melvills*, never returned to *Scotland*, and therefore could not sit in Judicatories after constant Moderators and Bishops were brought in; the other six Ministers, tho' they returned to *Scotland*, yet were confined to their own Parishes, and had not Access to sit in Judicatories: As for Mr. *John Davidson*, who is also mentioned by our Author, he was confined to his own Parish, and there is no Evidence of his sitting in the Judicatories after his Protestation against the Assembly at *Dundee*. Our Author likewise tells us, p. 177. " That, from 1610 to 1637, Masters *Robert Bruce, Andrew* " and *James Melvills, David Calderwood, Samuel Ruther-* " *foord, Alexander Henderson, David Dickson* and others, " remained in the Church." By remaining in the Church our Author means, that they continued in the Judicatories, and contended in a Way of Church-communion; but, in the several Instances he gives, he writes at Random. I am sorry that I must charge him so often with narrating what is neither Truth nor Matter of Fact: As for Masters *Andrew* and *James Melvills*, they never had Access to contend in any of the Judicatories after the Year 1610, in regard, as I have just now observed, they were taken up to *London* in the Year 1606, and never returned to *Scotland*. And, as for that great Man Mr. *Robert Bruce*, he was violently thrust from his Charge in the Year 1600, and banished the Country, because he had not such Satisfaction about the Truth of *Gowrie's* Conspiracy, as that he could with Assurance give publick Thanks unto the Lord for the King's Deliverance from it; and after this Time he never sat in any of the Judicatories: And tho' he had Liberty granted him by the King to return again to his own native Country, yet he was confined first to his own House at *Kinnaird*, and afterwards to *Inverness* and other Places; and, in the several Places wherein he was confined, he continued still to exercise his Ministry with great Success without any Conjunction with the Judicatories. During his Confinement at *Monkland* he kept

two solemn Fasts, assisted by the famous Mr. *Boyd* Principal of the College of *Glasgow*, and Mr. *Robert Scot* Minister there *; and he died *Anno* 1631, witnessing against the Defections of the Times without any Connexion with the Judicatories. As for Mr. *David Calderwood*, I have reported his Judgment already against joining in Synods after the Year 1610. This great and learned Man was confined to his own Parish, as also his *Copresbyter* Mr. *Johnston*, on account of their declining Bishop *Law's* Visitation of the Presbytery of *Fedburgh*. Mr. *Calderwood* was afterward deprived by the High Commission Court, and an Act of Banishment was past against him by the Privy Council †. With respect to Mr. *Henderson*, there is no Doubt that he joined in Synods after the Year 1610, for he was Prelatick in his Judgment; but our Author cannot prove that he continued to sit in the said Synods after he was savingly enlightened by the Ministry of Mr. *Robert Bruce*, as is reported by our Author from the *Fulfilling of the Scriptures*, *Essay* p. 31. As for Mr. *David Dickson*, who is also mentioned by our Author, he was deprived by the High Commission Court *Anno* 1622, and confined to *Turriff* in the North; and tho' he obtained Liberty by the Earl of *Eglintoun's* Intercession to return to his Charge at *Irvine*, yet our Author cannot instruct it, that ever he sat in any of the Synods during this Period. Our Author thinks fit likewise to mention Mr. *Rutherford* amongst others who remained in the Judicatories: Tho' Mr. *Rutherford* was ordained to the holy Ministry during the Time that Episcopacy prevailed, yet I hope none will credit our Author if he should affirm that Mr. *Rutherford* was ordained by the Bishops, or that he sat in their Diocesan Synods. When the Judgment and Practice of the worthy Ministers I have named is considered, as also Mr. *Rutherford's* known Zeal against Prelacy, our Author's positive Affirmations, that Mr. *Rutherford* and other eminent Ministers did sit in such Judicatories, must be held as mere Calumnies, until our Author produce good Vouchers for them, which he is not able to do. But tho' many of the Ministers at that Time did not frequent the Synods, yet they continued to keep up their Presbyterial Meetings. And this leads me to give a short Hint at the State of Presbyteries before the Year 1638. Our Author tells us, *Essay* p. 14. "That, because honest
" Ministers attended Presbyteries, therefore the King
" came

“ came at last to discharge them altogether.” Neither is this Matter of Fact. The Place in *Calderwood*, to which our Author directs us *, bears, that, at the pretended Assembly at *Glasgow* 1610, the Earl of *Dunbar* Commissioner produced the King’s Warrant to discharge Presbyteries; but this Warrant was never put in Execution. Tho’ such Threatnings were frequently used to frighten Ministers into a Compliance with the Measures of the Court, yet, from the 1596 to the 1638, Presbyteries were neither abolished nor discharged. *Calderwood* indeed observes, that the pretended Assembly 1610, to please the King, instead of the Word *Presbytery*, designed them the *Ministers of the Bounds*. Our Author likewise tells us in the same Page, “ That at that Time, *viz.* before 1638, “ it seems Elders were not allowed to sit with Ministers in “ Presbytery.” Our Author likewise is mistaken in this; for there was no Law during that Period, either Civil or Ecclesiastical, *disallowing* Elders their sitting with Ministers in Presbytery. Neither does his Citation from the Presbytery-Register of *Kirkaldy*, of the Date *September 13. 1638*, prove what he alledges; there he tells us, ’tis said that the “ Earl of *Rothes* and Mr. *Robert Douglas* “ shew, that it was thought meet by the Meeting at *Cou- “ par*, Ruling Elders should sit with the Presbytery.” This proves only that Elders were negligent in their Duty; and Instances can be given of many Presbyteries in *Scotland*, where frequently from one Synod to another an Elder is not to be seen in the Presbytery: But it would be very unreasonable if we should from this conclude, *it seems they are not allowed to sit with Ministers in Presbytery*. And, with respect to the State of Presbyteries, the Reader may take the following short Account from Mr. *Woodrow’s* History ‡, where, in giving an Account of the Difference betwixt the Prelates before the Year 1638, and these that were set up in the Year 1662, he observes, “ Our first Prelates were not against the Meetings of Pres- “ byteries in their several Jurisdictions, but they conti- “ nued to meet regularly, and had almost the whole of “ Church-discipline in their Hands; but now there is no “ Church-power save in the Person of the Bishop, and “ what he pleases to measure graciously out to whom he “ pleases.” From the above Account it is evident, that before the 1638 the Presbyteries continued to meet regularly, and had almost the whole of Church-discipline in their

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Hands:

* p. 569. ‡ Vol. I. p. 117, 118.

Hands: And from what I have observed it may appear, that any Power of Church-discipline they wanted, was violently taken out of their Hands by the Court of High Commission; and in this Case the Presbyteries were not active, but passive. Mr. *Woodrow* adds, from the Reverend Mr. *Robert Douglas's* Remarks, "That he (*viz.* Mr. *Douglas*) dealt with the Statesmen, in the Year 1662, not to discharge Presbyteries, but to allow them to stand as under the former Bishops; and suggested, that several Ministers would keep these Meetings, if permitted to continue as before, notwithstanding Bishops were set up; but if pulled down, and set up in Subordination to the Bishops, no honest Ministers would keep them." From this Account which Mr. *Douglas* gives, it is evident, that before the Year 1638 Presbyteries were not pulled down, and that they did not at that Time subsist in Subordination to the Bishops. It is a Loss unto us, that we have not a full and clear History of the State of the Church of *Scotland* before the Year 1638; we have only some historical Fragments from *Calderwood*, and we have nothing at all from the Year 1624, where his History ends. If we had any distinct History of that Period, I doubt not but it would appear, that as Presbyteries continued to meet regularly, so they likewise ordained Men to the holy Ministry without the Assistance and Concurrence of the then Bishops. I find from *Calderwood*, that in the Year 1621, when honest Ministers are convened out of all Quarters of the Country to protest against the Parliament's ratifying *Perth* Articles, and when they are charged by Proclamation to depart out of the Town under Pain of Rebellion, that one of the Reasons of the said Charge is, That some of them had intruded themselves in the Pulpits without a lawful Warrant or Calling; and, according to the Language of the Court at this Time, Intrusion without a lawful Calling or Warrant was, when the Bishop did not assist in the Ordination, in the Manner appointed by the pretended Assembly at *Glasgow*. I shall only take Notice of another of the Authorities adduced by our Author, to prove that our worthy Ancestors made a noble and resolute Stand against all Encroachments and Corruptions, but still in a Way of Church-communion; *viz.* the *Apologetical Relation*, p. 100. where, giving the Difference betwixt the State of Judicatories before the Year 1638, and after the Year 1662, 'tis said, "The Case then and now differeth far; for then these Judicatories were standing when the

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“ Prelates were brought in upon them, and Ministers
 “ were then bound to keep Possession of their Rights so
 “ long as they could, &c.” And it is very plain from the
 Account I have given of the State of Presbyteries, that it
 was their Duty to keep Possession of their Right, under
 Violence and Oppression from the Civil Powers. The Au-
 thor of the *Apologetical Relation* likewise observes in the
 same Place, That “ then they were Hedges standing in the
 “ Prelates Way, tho’ much weakned by Reason of the
 “ Civil Power opposing; but now they are Props to sup-
 “ port and strengthen the Hands of the Prelates, as be-
 “ ing wholly ruled and guided by them.” But it is to be
 regreted, that Presbyteries at present are so far from be-
 ing Hedges in the Way of the supreme Judicatory who
 are carrying on a Course of Defection, that they are
 rather Props to strengthen and support them, in so far as
 they do not duly testify against their Proceedings, nor cen-
 sure their Commissioners, who are either active in carry-
 ing on the said Course, or give not a suitable Testimony
 against the same.

Our Author to confirm and strengthen his Argument
 against Secession, from the Conduct of Ministers before
 the Year 1638, gives us a Citation from the Testimony
 of the Ministers of *Fife* and *Perth*; “ Then (*says he*)
 “ there was no Separation, tho’, as the said Ministers de-
 “ clare in their Testimony, Prelates were high in Power,
 “ a Service-book and Book of Canons were obtruded, and the
 “ greatest Part of the Ministry carried away with the Course
 “ of Conformity, and couching with *Isaachar* under the Bur-
 “ den.” But this Quotation is not laid in a very fair
 Manner, in regard a whole Sentence is omitted betwixt
 the first and last Part of the said Quotation. According
 as ’tis laid by our Author, his Reader may think that the
 Ministers of *Perth* and *Fife* say, That the greatest Part
 of the Ministry submitted to the Service-book and the
 Book of Canons; whereas the Ministers of *Perth* and
Fife say no such Thing: And any who know the History
 of that Time, know, that very few of the Ministry sub-
 mitted unto them; and these few either left the Country
 at that wonderful Turn in the Year 1638, or were duly
 censured by the Assembly that met that Year. Yet it
 is true what the Ministers of *Fife* affirm, That the
 greatest Part were carried away with the Course of Con-
 formity, in regard many did continue to sit in Synods after
 Bishops were intruded into the Moderator’s Chair; and,

in this Respect, such Ministers couched with *Iffachar* under the Burden. But the Ministers of *Fife* do not say that all the Ministry were carried away with the Course of Conformity; and therefore, for these Reasons, I humbly judge that our Author's Quotation is so far from supporting his Argument that there was no Separation under that Period, that it rather militates against him, and shews that there was a great Part of the Ministry who were not carried away with the Course of Conformity, and who did not contend in the Way of Ecclesiastical Communion with the Prelatick Party at that Time.

I shall not insist further on our Author's Instances from this Period, when I have taken Notice of the Account that he gives of Mr. *Rutherford's* Case, p. 14. "And at that Time (*says he*) Error, particularly *Arminianism*, was rampant in this Church; and, for writing against it in that Period, *Rutherford* was put from his Charge, and sent Prisoner to *Aberdeen*, where he was confined, as appears from his first Letter." It is very unpleasant to me, that I must so often charge our Author with misrepresenting or disguising Matters of Fact: Any that read the above Words, may be ready to conclude that Mr. *Rutherford* was censured by some Church-judicatory for writing against Error, and defending the Truth; but, in the Letter to which our Author refers, Mr. *Rutherford* writes, That it had pleased the Lord Jesus "to let loose the Malice of these interdicted Lords in his House" (meaning the Prelates) to deprive him of his Ministry at *Anwoth*, &c. The Case stood plainly thus; Mr. *Rutherford* was brought before the High Commission Court; the Book that he wrote against the *Arminians* was one Challenge against him; his not *lording* the Prelates was another, as he tells us in his Letters, Part 3d, Letter 36. And, according to the Practice of faithful Ministers at that Time, he declined the said Court; upon which he was deprived, and confined to *Aberdeen*. I hope it will not be alledged that this Court was a Judicatory of the Church of Scotland: None of the Judicatories of the Church did even at that Time condemn or censure Mr. *Rutherford* for writing against the *Arminians*; and, however corrupt their pretended Assemblies were, yet I must do them the Justice to own, that their Confession of Faith agreed upon at their pretended Assembly at *Aberdeen* was both sound and orthodox, and several Propositions in it are laid directly against the *Armi-*

nian Articles: Tho' our Author alledges that *Arminianism* was then rampant in the Church, yet there is Ground to fear that it is more rampant now than it was then *Rusworth* in his Collections observes ‡, from the Memoirs of the House of *Hamilton*, " That the Opinions of *Ar-*
 " *minius* were generally ill-reported of in all the refor-
 " med Churches, and nowhere worse than in *Scotland*;
 " and that most of the Bishops and their Adherents un-
 " dertook openly and zealously the Defence of these Te-
 " ners." This is mentioned in the foresaid Memoirs, as one of the Springs of that remarkable Revolution in the Year 1638; The whole Land being generally dissatisfied with *Arminian* Doctrine, this among other Things raised their Indignation at the Prelatick Party, who had openly espoused the same: And we shall afterwards see, that the General Assembly, that met the foresaid Year, did duly censure such as had openly taught *Arminianism*. I shall have done with our Author's Reasonings upon this Head, when I have observed what our Author alledges, p. 13. viz. " That the Defections of the Church
 " of *Scotland* after the Year 1596 for upwards of forty
 " Years were lamentable, and far more grievous than
 " can be pretended at this Day." And here I must differ from our Author, when he affirms that the Defections of the Church of *Scotland* were far more grievous in that Period than can be pretended at this Day; and that because *Arminian* Errors were not brought to the Bar of the Judicatories during the Period mentioned, and dismissed without any Censure at all: But this is the Case with respect to the present Judicatories; *Arminian* Errors have been brought to their Bar once and again, and have been dismissed without any particular Testimony against them. As also, tho' some of the Prelatick Party openly defended *Arminian* Doctrines in the foresaid Period, yet the Sound of *Arian* Blasphemy was never heard in the Church of *Scotland* till these degenerate Times wherein we live; and the *Arian* Scheme, in its modern Shape and Dress, has likewise been dismissed from the Bar of Judicatories without any suitable Testimony given against it. Again, if the proper Judicatories of the Church of *Scotland* did not in the former Period censure and condemn the Abettors of *Arianism*, it was because they were under the Restraints of outward Force and Violence; and therefore, when they are mercifully delivered

from

from these Restraints in the Year 1638, the Sword of Discipline was faithfully drawn against the Teachers of *Arminian* Doctrine: But it cannot be alledged that the present Judicatories of this National Church are under any such Restraints of outward Force and Violence, and yet they dismiss *Arminian* Errors and *Arian* Blasphemies from the Bar in the Manner I have already observed. Further, during that Period before the Year 1638, Presbyteries subsisted in a kind of independent State, without Subordination to the Bishops, also for the Space of about Thirty six Years, viz. from 1602 to 1638, without acknowledging a Subjection or Subordination to the pretended General Assemblies of that Period; yea, for the Space of twenty Years, that is, from 1618 to 1638, they had not any Ecclesiastical Court which had the Name of a General Assembly: But, in the present Period, Presbyteries continue in their Subordination and Subjection unto General Assemblies; and consequently all the present Judicatories of this National Church are one Ecclesiastick Body, wherein a Course of Defection is carried on from our Reformation and covenanted Principles. Therefore, and for all the above Reasons, I humbly judge the Defections of this National Church, as she is represented in her present Judicatories, are far more grievous than can be pretended concerning the above-mentioned Period betwixt 1596 and 1638.

After our Author has done with his Reasoning, p. 15. he concludes his Argument in the following Manner; "Tho' in the above Proposition I have narrated Matter of Fact, and shown what was the Practice of our worthy Ancestors who remained in the Church of *Scotland* in the Midst of most lamentable Defections, from 1597 to 1638;" (but how he has narrated Matter of Fact, and if he has fairly represented the Practice of our worthy Ancestors, I shall now leave it with the Reader to judge: Our Author adds) "Yet I have not declared my own Opinion in relation to their Conduct, nor told what I should reckon Duty were Things come to such a Pass with us as in their Day, which God forbid they ever should." I take this to be a modest Insinuation from our Author, as if he was more strict in his Principles than these eminent Men he has named, viz. *Masters Bruce, Welsh, Rutherford, &c.* However, I have no Manner of Strait to deliver my Opinion in relation to their Conduct, neither shall I be so very shy to tell what I should reckon

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Duty if I was in their Situation: And therefore I humbly judge, that, in a Consistency with the Testimony which I judge it my Duty to hold in Conjunction with my other Brethren, I could have joined in such Presbyteries, during that Period, as were wrestling against a Course of Defection, and who were noway active in carrying on the said Course, but rather passive, bearing and suffering Violence and Opposition from the Civil Powers, and who were also independent upon any General Assembly till the Lord turned back the Captivity of his People in the Year 1638. That which seems to be culpable in their Conduct is, that, according to Mr. *James Melville's* Judgment above-express'd, some few Ministers out of every Presbytery and Province did not associate together in a National Assembly, in order to censure the wicked Subverters of the Order and Discipline of the Church of *Scotland*. The only Apology that can be made for them is, That, if they had followed this Course, they might have expected, according to the Violence and Tyranny of these Times, the same Treatment that Mr. *Welsh* and his Brethren met with for holding an Assembly at *Aberdeen*. Our Author concludes, " Yet " it naturally follows, such as remained in Judicatories in " that Period, they could never have entertained a " Thought of Separation from us at this Day." Nay, it rather follows, that if such Ministers, who contended with so much Faithfulness and Zeal, against Violence and Opposition from the Civil Powers, for the just Rights and Privileges of the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus, were alive at this Day, they would never acknowledge the present Judicatories as their genuine Offspring, who are departing from, or giving up with, in the many particular Instances which I have mentioned, these Reformation-principles, for which our worthy Ancestors did valiantly contend, and for which they endured so many and so great Severities and Hardships. I am sensible I have insisted too long upon this Head; yet I thought it necessary, in order to give the Reader some View of the Conduct and Behaviour of the Witnesses for Christ in *Scotland* before the Year 1638, in regard it is generally misrepresented, and their Practice is, without the least Ground or Reason, adduced as an Argument against the Conduct of the seceding Brethren.

I have now done with our Author's Argument, as it is laid against the seceding Ministers from that former Period of this Church, whereby he represents their Conduct as altogether unprecedented, and contrary to the Judgment,

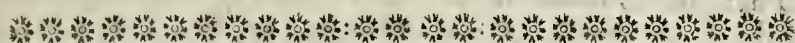
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Sentiments and Practice of our worthy Ancestors; and in his Preface, p. 11. he says with a magisterial Air, " It gave
 " me the greatest Freedom in writing against Separation
 " from the Church of *Scotland* in our Day, that I could
 " neither see Scripture Precept, Promise nor Example,
 " nor any approved Footsteps of the Flock, to countenance
 " it in any former Age since Christ had a Church upon
 " Earth." Thus he speaks upon the Matter to the seceding Ministers, as *Eliphaz* did to *Job* *, *Call now if there be any that will answer you, and to which of the Saints will you turn?* To which all the seceding Ministers may answer, We will turn to these faithful Ministers who refused to say, *Hic sum*, or, *I am here*, in these corrupt Judicatories in former Times of Defection: Also, we will turn to these Ministers and Presbyteries who refused the Authority and Jurisdiction of pretended General Assemblies, and continued in an independent State till the Lord gave them a free and faithful General Assembly: Likewise, we will turn to the approved Footsteps of the Protestant reformed Churches, as they are pointed out unto us in our first Confession of Faith, where we have the Characters of that Church unto which we may safely and warrantably join ourselves, namely, the *true Preaching of the Word*, or the Maintenance and Profession of the true Doctrine and the true Faith, the *right Administration of the Sacraments of Christ Jesus, and Ecclesiastical Discipline uprightly administered as God's Word prescribeth, whereby Vice is repressed, and Virtue nourished.* Yea further, we will turn ourselves to the Example and Footsteps of the primitive Church, who refused all Church-communion, both with the Erroneous, and with such as countenanced or tolerated Error. Yea, the seceding Ministers have Ground to say, We will turn to the Commandments of the Lord by his holy Apostles and Prophets, *Isa. lii. 11. Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean Thing, go ye out of the Midst of her; be ye clean that bear the Vessels of the Lord. Gal. v. 1. Stand fast therefore in the Liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free. 2 John 8. Look to yourselves, that we lose not those Things which we have wrought. 2 Cor. vi. 17. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean Thing; and I will receive you.* As also, to all the Scripture Commands and Directions which I have already particularly named in the preceeding Chapter, with many others, that give them full

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* *Job* v. 1.

Warrant for their present Conduct and Practice. And, to conclude, they have likewise Ground to say, We will turn to that Example and Pattern that the *faithful and true Witness* hath left us, who before *Pontius Pilate* witnessed a good Confession; and the Truth which in a peculiar Manner he did bear Witness unto, did concern his own Kingly Office and Spiritual Kingdom: As this was the Truth which was in a special Manner controverted and opposed by *Pontius Pilate* and the *Jews*, so whatever Truth is controverted or opposed in the Church, whether it concerns the Person or Offices of the Redeemer, all his Followers ought to make an open Profession and Confession of that Truth; they ought in a particular Manner to bear Testimony and Witness unto it, according to the different Stations in which they are placed, and the different Characters which they bear, that they may thereby contribute their Endeavours to render unto the exalted Head that Revenue of Honour, Glory and Praise, that is due unto him in a peculiar Manner from the Church militant; and that they may make his *Name to be remembred to all Generations*, Psal. xlv. 17.



C H A P. IV.

Wherein the injurious Reflections cast upon the reforming Period of this Church, betwixt 1638 and 1650, by the Author of the Essay, are considered.

I Have in the last Section of the preceeding Chapter narrated, that, when the Judicatories of this National Church were contending in their Ecclesiastical Capacity for the Crown-rights of the Redeemer the only King of *Zion*, and when they were wrestling for the Preservation of that Reformation-purity they had once attained unto, and for the Maintenance of the Government, Worship and Discipline of our Lord's House, they were born down by more than ordinary Violence from the Civil Powers, assisted by some ambitious and Time-serving Church-men. This Violence, Tyranny and Oppression continued for about the Space of forty Years; when, in the Midst of the Miseries and Calamities under which the

Church of Scotland groined, the Lord was pleased, in a very surprising and wonderful Manner, to turn back the Captivity of his People in this Land. When the Prelates were in the Height of their Power and Pride, and when the Church was like *Israel* in the Straits of *Pihabiroth* betwixt *Migdol* and the Sea, an unexpected Deliverance was given her in the Year 1638: And, for some Years thereafter, the Glory of the Lord did shine upon this Church; *She look'd forth as the Morning, fair as the Moon, clear as the Sun, and terrible as an Army with Banners.* I know none of the Presbyterian Denomination in Scotland, that have not both writ and spoke honourably of this Period, till the Author of the *Essay on Separation* appeared upon the Field, who under a Pretence (Pref. p. 5.) that the Faults of the Church of Scotland from 1638 to 1649 should be searched out, confessed, mourned over, and testified against, as much as her Faults 1650 or 1651, and other Times; under this Pretence, I say, he loads the Assembly 1638, and other Assemblies of that Period, with very unwarrantable and odious Proceedings: He speaks frequently in a very diminutive Manner of that reforming Period; he tells us, *That some do reckon it the purest Times of Presbytery*; he calls it an *extolled Period*, *Essay* p. 199, &c. and, p. 21. *says he*, "All our Separatists wonderfully magnify the Acts of Assemblies during that Period." Tho' I judge it my Duty to make honourable Mention of the foresaid Period, and to esteem it as a reforming Period of this Church; yet, if any reckon it faultless, or extol it above Measure, I shall not vindicate them: But I may safely say, that the Associate Presbytery, who are reckoned by our Author amongst the Separatists, have kept within just Bounds, when they express themselves in the following Manner, in their judicial *Act and Testimony*, p. 18. "But, since the Church while militant is in an imperfect State, it is not hereby intended to affirm, that under the above-mentioned Period there was nothing defective or wanting as to the Beauty and Order of the House of God, or that there was nothing culpable in the Administration: All that is designed by the above particular Deduction is, to declare that this Church endeavoured, and mercifully attained, a considerable Pitch of Reformation during the foresaid Period; towards this their several Contendings and Wrestlings, their solemn Vows and Engagements, their Declarations and Testimonies, all pointed." In the above Words, the Presbytery affirm, that

that the Judicatories of this Church endeavoured, and mercifully attained, a considerable Pitch of Reformation during the Period mentioned; and they give several particular Instances of this: I find none of them controverted by our Author, except the last, *viz.* an Act past in Parliament 1649, which I shall consider in its proper Place. The Presbytery likewise affirm, That the several Contentings and Wrestlings, the solemn Vows and Engagements, the Declarations and Testimonies of this Church during that Period, all pointed towards Reformation: And this is what our Author cannot refuse, tho' he has not done that Justice to this reforming Period as to acknowledge so much. And, from what I have observed in the preceeding Chapters, I hope the unprejudiced Reader may see, that the general Tendency of the Judicatories in the present Period is towards Deformation: They are so far from holding fast what we have received, and from contending towards further Reformation, that they are *letting slip* these Things that we have attained, and are justifying themselves in their several Defections and Backslidings. This one Observation is alone sufficient for the Vindication of what is asserted with respect to our reforming Period, in the Presbytery's *Act and Testimony*. But I judge it my Duty to endeavour to do Justice to that despised Period of our Reformation, by considering more particularly the Treatment that the Author of the *Essay* has given the Assembly 1638, and other famous Assemblies: And, in order to this, I shall premise a short historical Account of that wonderful Turn the foresaid Year 'Tis, as I have already observed, a considerable Loss unto this Church, that we have not a full and compleat History of that Period: However I shall make use of such Helps as I have at Hand, and, amongst others, of the *Latin* History, intituled, *Historia Motuum in Regno Scotiae*, or, *The History of the Commotions in the Kingdom of Scotland*, &c. This History was writ, according to some, by Mr. *Spang*; but, according to others, by Mr. *Baillie*, who was first Minister at *Kilwinning*, and a Member of the Assembly 1638, and afterwards Principal of the College of *Glasgow*, and one of the Commissioners of this Church to the Assembly at *Westminster*: The *Latin* Stile of the said History is agreeable to that of Mr. *Baillie's* in his other Writings, and, if need were, other Evidences of his being the Author of that History might even at this Distance of Time be produced. I likewise make use of a *Manu-*

script Journal of the Proceedings of the Assemblies 1638 and 1639, which I know is in the Hands of severals; and it agrees everywhere with the *Latin History*, and may justly be reckoned of equal Authority with any Manuscript of this Kind: Only the Reader may notice, that the Speeches of the Members of Assembly which are recorded in the *Journal*, some of which I have transcribed, seem to have been taken in short Hand when they were delivered, and therefore must needs labour under some Disadvantage; yet I thought it might give some Light into the Proceedings of the Assembly 1638, and I hope it will not be disagreeable to the Reader that I have transcribed a few of them. And what I intend for the Vindication of our reforming Period from 1638 to 1649, I shall cast into the following Sections.

S E C T. I.

A short historical Account of that glorious Appearance of God for the Church of Scotland in the Year 1638.

BEFORE I give a particular Account of that remarkable Turn of Affairs in this Church and Land in the Year 1637 and 1638, I do not reckon it amiss to take notice of some Things by which the Lord paved a Way for this great and glorious Revolution.

Tho' the Persecution was hot against some eminent Ministers, yet many, by the special Providence of God, had a peaceable Residence at their several Pastoral Charges: Some of them were protected by Persons of considerable Distinction; not a few of the first Rank in *Scotland* did distinguish themselves by a Concern for the Purity of Gospel-ordinances; even before the Year 1638, the Pride and Ambition of the Prelates rendered them odious to many of the first Rank and Quality in *Scotland*. And, besides, severals both of the Nobility and Gentry retained a Love and Regard to our Reformation-purity; and therefore many eminent Ministers were countenanced and protected in the peaceable Exercise of their Ministry: Amongst others, Mr. *David Dickson* Minister at *Irvine*, after he was deprived by the High Commission Court, and confined to *Turriff* in the North, was, thro' the Earl of *Eglintoun's* Influence, liberate from his Confinement, and restored unto the Exercise of his Ministry at *Irvine*. Like-
wise,

wife, tho' the Violence of the Bishops before the Year 1638 was great, yet it was nothing like the Tyranny and Fury of the Prelates in the late Times of Prelacy, as the Reader may see from Mr. *Woodrow's* History, where, stating the Difference betwixt the Prelates in the late Times and the former Bishops, he observes ‡, "That the old
 " Sett of Bishops made by the Parliament 1612 were but
 " *Pigmies* to the present high and mighty Lords." Hence, many faithful Ministers, who did not countenance the Diocesan Synods, had yet peaceable Residence in their own Parishes; the Lord made *the Wrath of Man to praise him, and the Remainder of Wrath he did restrain*. And here I cannot but notice one Thing which paved a Way for the above great Turn of Affairs, and by which the Lord prepared a People for himself; namely, The remarkable Success that did attend Gospel-ordinances under the Ministry of such faithful Gospel-ministers at this Time, who had not conformed to Prelacy. The Author of the *Fulfilling of the Scriptures*, p. 416. reports, "That there was a very
 " solemn and extraordinary Out-letting of the Spirit about
 " the Year 1625 and thereafter in the West of Scotland,
 " and particularly under the Ministry of Mr. *Dickson* at
 " *Irvine*." As also, he mentions that solemn Communion at the *Kirk of Shots*, "At which Time (*says he*) there was
 " so convincing an Appearance of God, and Down-pour-
 " ing of the Spirit, even in an extraordinary Way, that
 " did follow the Ordinances, especially the Sermon on
 " *Monday*, with a strange unusual Motion on the Hearers,
 " who in a great *Multitude* were there conveyed of di-
 " verse Ranks, that it was known (which, *adds he*, I can
 " speak on sure Ground) near Five hundred had at that
 " Time a discernible Change wrought on them, of whom
 " most proved lively Christians afterwards, &c."

Likewise, about this Time solemn Fasts were observed through the Land, on account of the present dismal and deplorable State of the Church of Scotland. Here I shall transcribe the Testimony of an Adversary, viz. Bishop *Guthrie*, who in his Memoirs, p. 8. speaking of the honest Ministers of that Period, he tells us, "They laboured to
 " increase the Number of their *Profelytes* everywhere,
 " and that not without Success, especially in *Fife*, and in
 " the western Parts. Whereunto (*says he*) a Way, which
 " they then begun, proved very conducive; and this it
 " was; They kept sometimes every Year a Fast in every
 " Kirk

“ Kirk throughout the Kingdom, where the Ministers
 “ were of their Stamp, *viz.* upon the first Sabbath of
 “ every Quarter; whereof there was no publick Intima-
 “ tion, save that the Ministers did privately desire so many
 “ of their Flock, as from Time to Time they could draw
 “ over to their Party, to join in it: And, upon those
 “ Days of Fasting, they used in their Doctrine to hint at
 “ the Danger of Religion by Prelacy, and the Depen-
 “ dencies thereof; and in their Prayers to supplicate for
 “ Remedy, with a Blessing upon all good Means which
 “ Providence should afford for that End; by which Course
 “ they prevailed much upon the Commons.” This perfid-
 “ ious and apostate Prelate does everywhere in his Me-
 “ moirs misrepresent the Proceedings of faithful Ministers
 both before and after the Year 1638; but from his above
 Words we may gather what was true Matter of Fact,
viz. That the honest Ministers at that Time kept solemn
 Fasts, for mourning over the Sins and Backslidings of the
 Land, and for Prayer unto the Lord for a Revival unto
 his Work in *Scotland*; and the Lord was pleased to give
 a gracious Return unto their Prayers in the Year 1638.
 I proceed now to give as short an Account as I can of the
 Beginning and Progress of that remarkable Appearance of
 the Lord in the foresaid Year.

In the Year 1637, a Liturgy with a Book of Canons be-
 ing framed by the Bishops for *Scotland*, King *Charles I.*
 resolved, however disagreeable they were unto a great
 many in the Church of *Scotland*, to impose the same upon
 that Church. His Design is now open and declared, to
 bring the Church of *Scotland* unto a full Conformity with
 the Church of *England*. The Liturgy devised for *Scot-*
land was in several Particulars worse than the *English* Li-
 turgy, and more agreeable to that of the Church of *Rome*:
 The *Latin* Historian gives some Instances to this Pur-
 pose †. And, by the Book of Canons designed to be im-
 posed upon the Church of *Scotland*, Presbyteries and Ses-
 sions which yet subsisted were wholly suppressed. But, when
 our Night was most dark, behold, the Day breaks; when
 our Strength seemed to be quite gone, the Lord of Hosts
 awoke for his oppressed Heritage, his right Hand and his
 holy Arm did work Deliverance for them: When the
 Liturgy is at first imposed upon *Scotland*, a Shaking began
 amongst the dry Bones; this Shaking did wax louder and
 louder, and the Bones came together Bone unto Bone, and la,
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† Hist. Mot. p. 28,

the *Sinews* came up upon them, and the *Skin* covered them above; and the Spirit of Life from the Lord did enter into Ministers and Professors, yea, into all Ranks of Persons through the Land.

According to King *Charles I.* his express Orders, the Liturgy is first opened in the great Church of *Edinburgh* by the Dean, with the Assistance of the Bishop of that Diocese, upon the 23^d of *July* 1637: But, the most Part of the People rising at that Instant, the Reading was stop't, and in like Manner in another of the Churches, where the Bishop of *Argyll* was attempting to read it. Within a short Time Supplications were given in to the Council, against the Liturgy and Book of Canons, by several Ministers and Professors through the Land; and in a few Weeks the most Part of the Nobility and Gentry, and the most Part of the Royal Boroughs, declared themselves against the above Impositions upon the Church of *Scotland*. In the Month of *September* the foresaid Year, a great Number of Ministers with Elders convene at *Edinburgh*, and supplicate the Council against the same: Likewise several Petitions signed by Persons of all Ranks, against the Service-book and the Book of Canons, were put into the Hands of the Duke of *Lennox*, who was then going to the Court, that he might present them to the King; and in the mean Time the Privy Council discharged the Bishops to press the Liturgy, till the King should be informed about the present State of Matters in *Scotland*: Upon which, the Ministers and Elders that were met at *Edinburgh* retired unto their several Dwellings. The Elders, who upon this Occasion came with the Ministers to *Edinburgh*, consisted (according to the *Latin* Historian) of the Nobility, and of the chief Magistrates of the Burghs; and he reports*, that, upon their return Home, "publick Fasts were kept, that
" the Lord might turn the Counsels of the King unto the
" publick Good of this Church and Kingdom, and that
" he might disappoint the Projects then on Foot against
" the Church of *Scotland*, so much shaken already by the
" subtil Devices of her Adversaries."

The Return to the above Supplications, and Informations from the Privy Council, came down from the King in the Month of *October*. Upon this Occasion there was a vast Confluence from all Parts of the Country to *Edinburgh*; according to the Bishop in his Memoirs, p. 24.
" Multitudes of People from several Parts of the Land
" flock-

* Hist. Mot. p. 35.

“ flocked to *Edinburgh*, to join in supplicating; and that
 “ so generally, that besides the Increase of Noblemen,
 “ who had not been formerly there, there were few or
 “ no Shires on the South of the *Grampian* Hills from
 “ which came not Gentlemen, Burghers, Ministers and
 “ Commons.” But no favourable Answer was given to
 the Supplications that had been sent up to the King; and
 a Proclamation was issued forth, charging all the Suppli-
 cants to depart out of the Town within Twenty four
 Hours under the Pain of Rebellion: As also, the Court
 of Session and the Privy Council were ordered within a
 set Time to remove from *Edinburgh*. But, notwithstand-
 ing of the above Proclamation, the Petitioners continued
 in the Town, their Numbers did daily increase, and by
 this Time all the Burghs except *Aberdeen* had declared
 themselves against the above Innovations in the Worship
 of God: And when the Petitioners saw that their former
 Supplications were not regarded, and when they consid-
 ered that the Cause in which they had interested themselves
 was a publick and common Cause, they resolved that they
 would act no more in a separate Capacity as hitherto they
 had done, but in a more unite and joint Capacity.
 And, about this Time, these Meetings were formed which
 were commonly called the *Tables*; they consisted of the
 Nobility, of the Gentlemen from the Shires, and of Ma-
 gistrates from the Burghs, and of Ministers from all Corners
 of the Land. These Meetings did not assume to them-
 selves any juridical Power, but were held for Consultation
 and mutual Advice, with respect to the proper Measures
 that should be taken for the Redress of their present
 Grievances.

After the above Proclamations were made, a Petition
 was agreed upon to be given in to the Privy Council,
 containing a Complaint against the Bishops as Authors of
 the Liturgy and of the Book of Canons, as Renters of
 the Church, and Underminers of Religion, as Movers
 of Discontent between the King and his Subjects, and of
 Discord between Subject and Subject: And, in regard the
 most Part of the Bishops were Members of the Privy
 Council, they not only craved that the above Charge a-
 gainst them might be put to the Trial, but also they state
 them as Parties, and crave that they be not suffered to sit
 any more as Judges until the Cause is tried and decided
 according to Justice *. The *Latin* Historian reports,
 that

* *Rusworth's* Collect.

that a vast Number of all Ranks subscribed the above Petition and Complaint, and that it was adhered to by all who had it at Heart to assert the Liberties of the Church, and the Purity of Divine Worship, in Opposition to the Tyranny of Bishops and Superstition ||.

The Number of the Petitioners did daily increase at *Edinburgh*, and the Privy Council had none to support their Authority; all *Scotland* almost being now engaged on the Side of the Petitioners, the Bishops and their Adherents were become a despicable Party: But, in regard it was judged inexpedient that such Numbers should continue in *Edinburgh*, as also because the Council were offended at such numerous Meetings, therefore it was agreed betwixt the Privy Council and the Petitioners, that some few should be chosen by the Petitioners themselves out of their own Number, to remain at *Edinburgh*, there to attend upon an Answer to their several Petitions, Supplications and Complaints. In Consequence of this Agreement and Resolution, the Nobility chose four out of their Number; the Shires, the Burghs and the Ministers did in like Manner each of them choose four to remain at *Edinburgh* for the End above-mentioned, as also to give Intelligence through the Country as should be found necessary from Time to Time. I judge it not improper that I here narrate what is reported by the *Latin Historian* ‡, viz. That, before they parted from *Edinburgh*, “they came
“under solemn Promises and Engagements each of them
“for personal Reformation, as also that they would be
“instant in Fasting and Prayer, that the Lord would turn
“away his Anger from his People, and that he would be
“graciously pleased to turn the Heart of the King to
“such Counsels as might be for the Glory of God, the
“Honour of the Crown, and the Peace and Safety of his
“Subjects.”

The Privy Council informed the King concerning the Petition and Complaint against the Bishops; and, by an Express sent down in the Beginning of *December*, the King discharges the Council to meddle any more in that Matter: Whereupon, the Deputies from the Petitioners resolved upon a Protestation to be given in to the Council, bearing that they had tried all peaceable Measures without Success, and that it might be warrantable for them to use their Endeavours for the Preservation of the Liberties of

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the Church; as also, declaring, that if any Tumult arose, thro' their Prosecution of the Cause, the Council only might be blamed, as refusing Justice. When the Privy Council heard of the above Protestation, they agreed to give the Deputies a Hearing, and in the mean Time advise the Bishops to withdraw from the Council.

The Privy Council being met at *Dalkeith* on 21st of *December*, the Deputies from the several Petitioners appeared before them: And that religious and truly noble Patriot, the Lord *Lowdon*, did, in a very eloquent Speech, justify the Proceedings of the Petitioners, and insisted that the Bishops might be tried according to Law and Justice, and offered to prove them guilty of grievous Crimes, in name of the said Petitioners, under their highest Peril; he likewise obtested the Privy Council, that without further Delay they would evidence to the whole Nation their Regard to Justice and the Purity of Religion. The Speech of this noble Lord is followed by another from one of the Ministers, who put them in Mind of the Curse that is pronounced upon *Meroz*, if they should withdraw their helping Hand from the Church in her present Situation; as also, that the Lord hath said, *Him that honoureth me I will honour, and those that despise me shall be lightly esteemed*: He likewise told them, That, if in this perillous Time they should hold their Peace, Deliverance and Enlargement would come to the Church from some other Airth. The *Latin* Historian adds *, That the Minister insisted upon the above Places of Scripture, and applied them in such a pathetick Manner, as drew Tears from several Members of Council. The Answer which the Privy Council gave to the said Deputies or Commissioners was, That they were bound up by the King's expresse Orders from meddling in these Matters; and they likewise expressed their Grief and Sorrow that they could not satisfy the Desires of the Petitioners, and therefore told them to wait yet patiently for a short Time, till they should again inform the King about the present Posture of Affairs. Accordingly the Privy Council wrote unto the King; and the King sent for the Earl of *Traquair*, that he might have a more particular Information from him concerning the State of Matters in *Scotland*.

In the Month of *February* 1638 the Earl of *Traquair* returned from Court, and he went to *Stirling*, where the Privy Council was sitting, where a Proclamation was published

blished in the King's Name, wherein the King owned the Liturgy and the Book of Canons, and declared they were not contrary to the Laws of the Land; as also, that the Liturgy was a ready Mean to maintain the true Religion already professed: Likewise, the said Proclamation condemned the Meetings of the Supplicants as Conspiracies contrary to the Laws of the Land, and discharged all such Meetings of the Subjects to be held either in *Stirling*, or in any other Burgh where the Privy Council or Court of Session should sit. The Petitioners prepared a Protestation against the above Proclamation, which was read by the Earl of *Home* and Lord *Lindsay*, accompanied with a great Croud of Nobles and People, and affixed on the Cross of *Stirling*; and Instruments were taken thereupon in the Hands of a publick Notar *. In the said Protestation, they protested against the Books of Liturgy and Canons, as manifest Innovations, and full of Errors and Superstition; and likewise against the Privy Council's refusing to receive Libels against the Bishops: They protested likewise against the High Commission Court, as a Court obtruded on *Scotland* contrary to the fundamental Laws of the Land; as also, that the Bishops should not be Judges in their own Cause: And they further protested, that their Meetings and Supplications were lawful and warrantable, being only intended against the Tyranny of the Bishops, and for the just Rights and Liberties of the Church, and against the Novations lately obtruded upon her; and therefore, that it should be warrantable for them to continue these Meetings for the above Ends and Purposes. And finally, they protested, that they could not with a good Conscience forbear the said Meetings, unless they should wrong the Glory of God, and betray the Honour of the King, and the Liberties of Church and Kingdom.

The Deputies at *Edinburgh* had sent Intelligence unto the Petitioners through the Nation, concerning the present State of Matters: And, upon this Occasion, a great Number of Noblemen, Gentlemen, Ministers and others convened at *Stirling*; according to Bishop *Guthrie* in his *Memoirs*, they were reckoned above Two thousand in Number. They resolved, upon the above Proclamation that was made discharging them to continue in *Stirling* under Pain of Rebellion, to depart peaceably to *Edinburgh*. And here I must inform the Reader, that they began now to testify in a more plain and more solemn Manner for the

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Liberties of the Church of *Scotland*, and our Reformation-purity. The Proclamation that I have mentioned had a quite contrary Effect to what was intended and designed by the King and the Prelatick Party: It issued in a publick Acknowledgment of their Breach of Covenant, and in the Return of all Ranks of Persons through the Land unto the Lord, by the Renovation of their solemn National Engagements; and this was done, both with deep Mourning, and with great Joy. I shall here transcribe what the several Writers I have before me report upon this extraordinary Occasion.

The Paper I have formerly mentioned, intituled, *A short Relation of the State of the Kirk of Scotland*, published Anno 1638, narrates, That “ the whole Nobility, Gentry, “ Boroughs, Ministers and Commons, who had now so “ often supplicate, and so long attended, were cast into “ great Difficulties; considering their Religion, so well “ warranted by God’s Word, and established by the Laws “ of the Kirk and Kingdom, was now begun to be changed, “ both in Doctrine and Discipline, at the Pleasure of the “ Fourteen Bishops, and the Liberties of the Country like “ to be infringed by their Usurpation; and, having complained often upon them to his Majesty by his Council, “ were answered by the former Declaration, viz. at *Stirling*.——All these did move the Supplicants to bethink “ the renewing of the National Covenant of this Kirk and “ Kingdom (the Breach whereof hath been a special “ Cause to bring these Evils upon them) as a good Mean “ for obtaining the Lord’s wonted Favour, having many “ Examples in holy Scripture, that the People of God “ have happily renewed their Covenant with God.” The *Apologetick Relation*, p. 47. reports, That, being “ commanded to depart forth of the Town of *Stirling*, they “ go together towards *Edinburgh*; and there, after serious “ Thoughts, they find the main procuring Cause of all “ these Calamities to be the Violation of the National Covenant, and therefore they unanimously resolved to renew that Covenant.” The *Latin Historian* reports †, “ That a numerous Company went from *Stirling* to *Edinburgh*, advertising their Associates, that they should come “ quickly thither, in order to deliberate on such Things “ as might make for their common Safety: And when “ they called to Mind, that the chief Cause of all their “ Calamities, both of old and of late, was the Breach of “ the

† Hist. Mor. p. 43.

“ the National Covenant that had been made with God,
 “ they unanimously conclude upon a solemn Renovation
 “ of the same.”

But the Account that is given by the Church of *Scotland*, in their Letter to the Churches of *Helvetia* in the Year 1640, concerning this important Matter, deserves to be noticed. This excellent Letter contains a succinct Account of the State of the Church of *Scotland* from her Reformation till the Year 1640; and, concerning this remarkable Turn in the Year 1638, they express themselves in the following Manner: “ For when, by the
 “ King’s Proclamation, Ministers and People were cast
 “ into such Straits, that they were forced either to ly under the Charge of Rebellion, or to embrace that Liturgy, contrary to the Oath, Faith, and Laws of Church and Country; it came to pass, that the Estates of the
 “ Kingdom, whose Patience was for a long Time benumbed in bearing with the Bishops, being awakned with the News of this Liturgy, did take Counsel concerning
 “ extirpating Corruptions, and restoring their antient Purity. Therefore they insisted by many Suplications, intreating, beseeching, and exhorting his most Serene
 “ Highness the *King*, and his honourable *Council*, that they would succour the afflicted Church, and call the
 “ Bishops to an Account, who were the Authors of so great Mischiefs: But while they perceived that no Redress was given them, and that no Answer was returned unto their Petitions, and that their Demands were
 “ not regarded, *they entred more deep within their own Breasts, searching into the Recesses of their Souls; and the Remembrance of their Breach of Covenant did sting, wound and pierce through their Consciences: Wherefore, being moved with serious Repentance, they resolved to renew their Covenant or National Confession, which was at first signed with all their Hands, (viz. of the General Meetings or Estates of the Kingdom;) then, a solemn Fast being appointed, it was publickly ratified in the Churches, by swearing with their right Hands lifted up, with deep Groans and Tears ||.*” Here the Reader may see the Estates of the Kingdom *ordines regni*, so they are designed in the Letter, as also the whole Nation; under strong Convictions and deep Sorrow and Mourning. What was the Ground and Reason of all this Sorrow and Mourning? It was even their Breach of Covenant. But, where-

wherein were they guilty of Breach of Covenant? They had never submitted to the Liturgy, nor to the Book of Canons; they had always opposed them, and testified against them: Therefore this Sorrow for the Breach of their Covenant was on Account of the Course of Defection that had been carried on for above thirty Years bypast, by the rearing up of Prelacy, and by the five Articles of *Perth*, and what Compliances there had been with the same.

When the Petitioners had met at *Edinburgh*, and had resolved to renew the Covenant as is above declared; the Covenant, as it was framed by the *General Meetings*, consisted of three Parts. They first inserted the National Confession of Faith without any Alteration, as it was compiled and sworn in the Year 1580 by the King and his Household, and thereafter by Persons of all Ranks in the Year 1581, according to an Ordinance of the Privy Council, and an Act of the General Assembly; and again by all Sorts of Persons in the Year 1590.

Immediately after the above National Confession, the *General Meetings* did insert a great many Acts of Parliament in favours of the reformed Religion, in Doctrine, Worship and Discipline: These Acts of Parliament were insert at that Time by the Meetings at *Edinburgh*, to justify their Proceedings before the World; and to shew, that they were not acting contrary to the laudable Laws of the Land, but that they had Law on their Side, even tho' the Court was opposing their present Proceedings. And here I must observe, that it is a Mistake that many are under, when they affirm, That the several Acts of Parliament mentioned are a Part of the Oath of the Covenant; for all that is intended by them is to prove the legal Warrant that the Covenanters had for their present Proceedings. As the King's Coronation-oath is insert among the rest, so it would be ridiculous to say that the Subjects swore the Coronation-oath.

After the above Acts of Parliament, instead of the general *Bond* which was subjoined to the Covenant in the Year 1590, the Meetings at *Edinburgh* subjoin a new *Bond*, whereby the National Confession of Faith or Covenant is accommodated to their Circumstances at that Time. This was done after the Example of their worthy and religious Progenitors, who in the said 1590 had signed the Covenant, with a *Bond* agreeable to their Situation and Circumstances in the foresaid Year. In the *Bond* that was agreed upon

upon in the Year 1638, they condemn the Innovations and Evils contained and particularly mentioned in their late Supplications, Complaints and Protestations; as having no Warrant of the Word of God, and also as contrary to the Articles both of the large Confession of Faith, and of the National Confession or Covenant. With respect to the Innovations in the Worship of God, *viz.* by the five Articles of *Perth*, and the Corruption of the publick Government of the Kirk, and the Civil Places and Power of Kirkmen, they bind themselves to forbear the Practice of all such Novations, till they be tried and allowed in free Assemblies and in Parliaments. And they further engage "to labour, by all Means lawful, to recover the Purity and Liberty of the Gospel, as it was established and professed before the foresaid Novations." 'Tis plain, that, by the above Words of the *Bond*, the five Articles of *Perth*, the Government of the Kirk by Bishops, &c. are virtually condemned; in regard they are called *Novations*, and under the foresaid Novations that Purity and Liberty of the Gospel, as it was formerly established and professed, was wanting. But yet the *General Meetings* do not expressly condemn the above Novations as contrary to the Confession of Faith, but refer the Question to the Determination of a free and lawful General Assembly; in regard severals doubted if the Novations mentioned were contrary to our National Confession of Faith: And as the General Meetings did not act in a judicative Capacity, so they thought it proper to refer the Question to the Determination of an Assembly, especially when they had now the Hopes of having such a free and lawful Assembly, to whom they might safely refer a Question of this Nature. But it is here to be noticed, that such as were in the Dark upon this Question, were willing to submit the same to the Trial and Determination of a free and lawful Assembly; and hereby they likewise declared themselves willing to ly open unto Light upon the above important Question. The *Latin Historian* * mentions them as a considerable Number, who either reckoned the aforesaid Novations indifferent, or who doubted if they were condemned by our National Confession of Faith: But, as that learned Author was the only Member of the Assembly at *Glasgow* who did hesitate when the Questions were determined concerning the Government of the Kirk by Bishops, and the five Articles of *Perth*; so he seems to magnify the

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* Hist. Mot. p.

Numbers, as is evident from what is already observed concerning the Proceedings of the General Meetings, and may yet more fully appear from what I am further to offer upon what past this Year.

Besides what concerned the above-mentioned Novations, the Bond subjoined to the Covenant contains a qualified Allegiance to the King, *viz.* an Engagement, to “stand
“ to the Defence of our dread Sovereign the King’s Majesty his Person and Authority, in the Defence and Preservation of the foresaid true Religion, Liberties and
“ Laws of the Kingdom:” As also, they bind themselves to the mutual Defence and Assistance one of another, in the same Cause of maintaining the true Religion and his Majesty’s Authority. They likewise “swear, by the great
“ Name of the Lord their God, to continue in the Profession and Obedience of the foresaid Religion; and
“ that they shall defend the same, and resist all the contrary Errors and Corruptions specified, according to
“ their Vocation, and to the utmost of that Power that
“ God hath put in their Hands, all the Days of their Life.” In like Manner, they bind themselves to a Life and Conversation as becometh Christians who have renewed their Covenant with God; and that both in publick, and in their particular Families and personal Carriage, they shall endeavour to keep themselves within the Bounds of their Christian Liberty; and also to be good Examples to others, of all Godliness, Soberness and Righteousness, and of every Duty to God and Man.

As the above is the Sum and Substance of the *Bond* which the *General Meetings* at *Edinburgh* subjoined, so the *Covenant* with the said *Bond* was sworn with great Solemnity on the first of *March* 1638, in the *Gray-friars* Church of *Edinburgh*. The Flower of the Nation were present; this solemn Meeting consisted of the Nobility, of the Barons and Gentlemen from the several Shires, of Burgessees from the Burghs, with Ministers and others; and thereafter Copies of the Covenant were sent through the whole Nation. According to the *Latin* Historian *, it was sworn through the whole Land before the End of *April*, except by *Papists*, who were then but a very inconsiderable Party; as also excepting such who were addicted to the *English* Ceremonies, and who favoured the Book of Canons and Liturgy, amongst whom he reckons the *Aberdeen* Doctors and Ministers: He mentions also others who at their Entrance

* Hist. Mot. p. 60.

trance into the Ministry had engaged to the Observance of the Articles of *Perth*. But the *Apologetical Relation* reports, p. 48. "That in a short Time few in all the Land did refuse, except some *Papists*, some aspiring Courtiers who had no Will to displease the King, some who were addicted unto the *English* Rites and Ceremonies, and some few Ministers who had sworn the Oath at their Entry appointed by the Parliament *Anno* 1612." Mr. *Rapine* informs us †, "That the Innovations introduced into the Church for thirty or forty Years past, were disapproved by almost the whole Kingdom." And, having insert the above-mentioned Bond, he adds, "This Covenant, like an Alarm-bell, brought all the *Scots* together that were dissatisfied with the Government, that is, almost the whole Nation! It was subscribed by the great Men and the People, except the Privy Counsellors, the Judges, the Bishops, and such Ministers as were Dignitaries in the Church."

I have already given an Account, from the Letter to the Churches in *Helvetia*, after what Manner the Covenant was sworn at this Time. Tho' the said Testimony is sufficient, yet I shall subjoin a few mo, who take notice, not only of Mourning, but also of great Joy through the Land upon this solemn Occasion, with great Readiness and Willingness in coming under the Oath of God.

The first I shall mention is Bishop *Guthrie* in his *Memoirs*, p. 30. where he tells us, That "upon the first of March 1638, they being all assembled in the *Gray-friars* Church and Church-yard, the Covenant was publickly read, and subscribed by them all with much Joy and Shouting. He adds, The Archbishop of *St. Andrews* being then return'd from *Stirling* to *Edinburgh*, when he heard what was done, said, *Now all that we have been doing these Thirty Years past is thrown down at once.*"

The *Apologetick Relation*, p. 48. informs us, "That the Covenant, being read in the Churches, was heartily embraced and sworn, and subscribed with Tears, and great Joy." He adds, Great was this Day of the Lord's Power; for much Willingness and Cheerfulness was among the People." Likewise, Masters *Alexander Henderson* and *David Dickson*, in their first Answer to the Replies of the *Aberdeen* Doctors and Ministers, say, "And for that which displeaseth you in our Way, that we deal after such a Manner with People to come in (*viz.* to

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“ the Covenant): We answer, That we have seen in this
 “ Land *the Day of the Lord's Power*, wherein his People
 “ have most willingly offered themselves in Multitudes, like
 “ the Dew of the Morning: That others of no small Note
 “ have offered their *Subscriptions*, and have been refused,
 “ till Time should try that they join in Sincerity; from
 “ Love to the *Cause*, and not from the Fear of Men:
 “ And that no *Threatnings* have been used, except of the
 “ deserved Judgment of God; nor Force, except the
 “ Force of *Reason*, from the high Respects which we owe
 “ to *Religion*, to our *King*, to our native *Country*, to our-
 “ selves, and to the Posterity; which hath been to some a
 “ greater Constraint than any external Violence, and we
 “ wish may also prevail with you.” And from the fore-
 said Answers we may also see, that this solemn Work was
 carried on with Fasting and Humiliation through the Land:
 In the first and Eleventh Answers 'tis said, That the *Aber-*
deen Ministers declined to concur with the rest of the
Kirks of the Kingdom in publick Humiliation and Fasting.
 I shall only add the Testimony of that eminent Minister,
 Mr. *Livingston*, who in his Life writ by himself, p. 22.
 reports, “ I was present at *Lanark*, and at several other
 “ Parishes, when, on a Sabbath after the Forenoon's Ser-
 “ mon, the Covenant was read and sworn; and may tru-
 “ ly say, that in all my Lifetime, except one Day at the
 “ *Kirk of Skots*, I never saw such Motions from the Spirit
 “ of God; all the People generally, and most willingly
 “ concurring: I have seen more than a Thousand Persons
 “ all at once lifting up their Hands, and the Tears falling
 “ down from their Eyes; so that through the whole Land,
 “ except the professed *Papists*, and some few who for base
 “ Ends adhered to the *Prelates*, the People universally
 “ entred into the *Covenant of God*, for Reformation of
 “ Religion, against *Prelates* and the *Ceremonies*.”

Reader, stop here, and behold the Nobility, the Barons,
 the Burghers, the Ministers and Commons of all Sorts in
Scotland, all in Tears for their Breach of Covenant, and for
 their Backsliding and Defection from the Lord, and at
 the same Time returning with great Joy unto their God,
 by swearing cheerfully and willingly to be the Lord's. It
 may well be said of this Day, Great was the Day of *Fez-*
zeel: It was a Day wherein the Arm of the Lord was
 revealed, a Day wherein the Princes of the People were
 assembled, to swear Fealty and Allegiance to that great
King whose Name is the *Lord of Hosts*: It was the Day
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of the Redeemer's Power, wherein his Volunteers flowed unto him; even the Day wherein his Youth were like the Dew from the Womb of the Morning. If we compare our present Times with the above Day of the right Hand of the most High, may we not take up a Lamentation over our Land, and cry, *Ah Scotland, Scotland, how is thy Gold become dim! how is thy most fine Gold changed!* Where is that Zeal for the Redeemer's Honour and Glory, that was once warm in the Breasts of thy Nobility, thy Barons, thy Ministers and Commons? Where is that heroick Courage and Resolution for the Cause of Christ, as well as for the Liberties of the Nation, that did at this Time animate all Ranks of Persons through the Land? Where art thou now? Ah! how much sunk in great Degeneracy and Defection from the Lord! Can *these dry Bones in Scotland live?* The Lord only knoweth, the Residue of the Spirit is with him. It becomes us to acknowledge that we have sinned, and that we have dealt treacherously in his Covenant, and that he is righteous and holy in restraining his Spirit from us; it is likewise our Duty to *wait upon the Lord, who hideth his Face from the House of Jacob.*

The Town of *Aberdeen* was the only Place of any Consideration in *Scotland* that declined to join in the Covenant, being very much under the Influence of their Ministers, who all adhered to the Prelatick Interest: Therefore the General Meetings at *Edinburgh* sent Masters *Alexander Henderson, David Dickson* and *Andrew Cant* to that Town, to deal with Ministers and People in a brotherly and friendly Manner, to join with the Church and Kingdom in the Covenant lately sworn. And when the said Ministers came to *Aberdeen*, as they report in the Preface to their Answers to the *Aberdeen* Doctors and Ministers, they were altogether refused the Pulpits and Kirks; and therefore they preached in a convenient Place for two Sabbaths, and delivered their Message in the Audience of many, and they found that their Labour was not in vain in the Lord: "For, *say they*, diverse Persons, of special Note both for Place and Wisdom, with willing Heart and great Readiness of Mind, did publickly put their Hands to the Covenant."

The King being informed of the Proceedings at *Edinburgh*, and of the Renovation of the National Covenant through the Land, he sent down the *Marquis of Hamilton* as his High Commissioner to *Scotland*. The *Marquis* was invested with this eminent Character, as Mr. *Rapine* re-

ports *, because the King imagined "he would by his
 " Credit and Industry reduce the People of *Scotland* to his
 " Obedience, without giving them any real Satisfaction,
 " being still very unwilling to desist from his Projects." When the *Marquis* came down to *Scotland*, he demanded, that they should deliver up and renounce their subscribed Covenant: This they all honestly and boldly refused to do. Then the *Marquis* demanded, What might be expected from them for returning to their former Obedience to the King? They replied, That they could not return to his Majesty's Obedience, in regard they had never departed from it; and in the mean Time they insisted for a free Assembly and Parliament.

When the *Marquis* could not prevail upon the *General Meetings* to give up with their subscribed Covenant, he did, before he returned to Court, publish a Declaration from the King, bearing Date at *Greenwich* the 28th of *June* this Year: This Declaration was designed more to amuse than to give any real Satisfaction. By it, the Proceedings of the Meetings at *Edinburgh* are condemned, under the Name of Disorders and great Disorders; and the King's Mind with respect to the Book of Canons, the Liturgy and High Commission Court, is declared in very doubtful and general Terms. Upon the publishing of the above Declaration, a Protestation is read against it at the Cross of *Edinburgh*, in the Name of the Noblemen, Barons, &c. I find, from a Copy of this Protestation before me printed in the Year 1638, that Instruments were taken thereupon in the Hands of three Notars, by the *Earl of Cassils* in Name of the Noblemen, by Mr. *Gibson* of *Dury* in Name of the Barons, by the Provost of *Dundee* in Name of the Burrows, and by Mr. *Ker* at *Salt-Prefoun* in Name of the Ministers, and by Mr. *Archibald Johnston* (afterwards Lord *Waristoun*) in Name of all who adhered to the Confession of Faith and Covenant, lately renewed within this Kingdom. In the above Protestation, after several weighty Grounds and Reasons laid down against the King's Declaration, they declare their Adherence to the Whole of our Reformation, notwithstanding of any Innovations introduced, either of *old* or of *late*: As also their Adherence to the Grievances, Supplications, and Protestations given in at Assemblies and Parliaments; and to their late Complaints, Supplications, Protestations, &c. And likewise their hearty Adherence to their Oath and Subscrip-

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tion of the Confession of Faith, the *Solemn Covenant* between God and this Church and Kingdom: And, in like Manner, they justify all their former Proceedings, and protest against any Act or Deed of the Privy Council, carrying an Approbation of the King's Declaration, as unjust, illegal and null; and offer to submit their Cause to the first free General Assembly of the Church, and Parliament of the Estates. The curious Reader may see this Protestation, at full Length, together with the King's Declaration in *Rulbworth's Collections* for the Year 1638.

After the Return of the *Marquis of Hamiltoun* to the Court, solemn Fasts were observed through *Scotland* on Account of the present State and Situation of Affairs, and especially upon these Days wherein the King's Cabinet Council at *London* met upon the Affairs of *Scotland* †. In the mean Time, the *General Meetings*, fearing Delays, agreed to publish a Paper, intituled, *Reasons for a General Assembly*; wherein they prove the Necessity of a *General Assembly*, from the present State of the Church of *Scotland*; and that this is one of the Rights and Privileges that belongs to the Church, from the Word of God, to hold such Assemblies; as also, that the Church of *Scotland* is warranted to hold her General Assemblies, by such Laws of the Land as had never been repealed. And they likewise argue, That when the Christian Magistrate either forbiddeth, or in the urgent Necessities of the Church forbeareth to convene Assemblies; that, in this Case, the Church is left to her own Liberty, and must provide for her own Safety: And for this they give the following Reason, which deserves to be noticed; "The great Wisdom of Jesus Christ, the King of the Kirk, hath provided sufficient Supplies for all her Necessities, and fitting Remedies for all her Evils, of which there be many that cannot be helped without General Assemblies; and therefore, not only the Christian Prince, but the Pastors of the Kirk, especially when the Indiction cannot be obtained of the Prince, are bound, as they will answer to Christ, to provide that the Ecclesiastick Republick receive no Detriment, and to esteem the Safety of the Kirk to be the supreme Law." The above Paper is short, but very nervous and strong; and about this Time the *General Meetings* came to a Resolution, that in case the King should refuse or delay to call

† Hist. Mot. p. 70.

call a General Assembly, that they would fall upon the most proper Measures themselves, for convening a free National Assembly of the Church of *Scotland*.

The *Marquis of Hamiltoun* returned again to *Scotland* about the 12th of *August*, and proposed from the King the granting of an Assembly, but upon such Conditions as had an evident Tendency to disappoint the Design of a free General Assembly. Mr. *Rapine* reports *, “ That the high Commissioner perceiving he had to deal with Men who were upon their Guard, and that it would be difficult to surprize them, resolved to take a second Journey to *England*, to inform the King of the State of Affairs. By putting the *Malecontents* (as *Rapine* thinks fit to call our Covenanters) in Hopes the King would grant such a General Assembly as they desired, he obtained with great Difficulty, that the Election of Commissioners should be delayed till his Return, which was fixed to the 21st of *September*.” Likewise the *Latin Historian* reports ||, ‘That it was with great Difficulty that many agreed to the Delay, on account of the present Necessity of a General Assembly: But it was at length concluded, that, if the *Marquis* did not return against the 22d of *September*, they should proceed in the Election of Commissioners for a General Assembly.

The *Marquis* returned from *London* before the Day appointed; and, on the 22d of *September*, a Proclamation was made for a General Assembly to be held and kept at *Glasgow* upon the 21st of *November*, as also another Proclamation for a Parliament to meet at *Edinburgh* on the 15th of *May* 1639: Together with the above Proclamations an Act of Privy Council was published, commanding all to sign the National Covenant or Confession of Faith, with the general Bond subjoined *Anno* 1589. But the *General Meetings* at *Edinburgh* perceiving, that, by the above Proclamation for an Assembly, a free General Assembly was not intended, for this Reason amongst others, because Archbishops and Bishops, as well as other Commissioners, were warned to repair to the said Assembly as Members thereof; Also, they perceiving that by the Act of the Privy Council, appointing the Covenant to be sworn and subscribed with the Bond annexed *Anno* 1589, the Covenant as it was lately sworn, with the Bond which the said Meetings had subjoin’d thereto, was upon the Matter condemned: Therefore they prepare a

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* Vol. i. p. 306. || Hist. Mot. p. 72.

Protestation, which was read at the Cross of *Edinburgh*, immediately after the above Proclamations, in the midst of many Noblemen, Barons, Gentlemen, &c. adhering to the same.

The above Protestation is long, and well drawn. They first give Thanks unto the King for indicting a General Assembly, and declare their Resolution to hold the Assembly at the Time appointed; then they pray, that the Lord may enlarge the King's Heart, to give full Satisfaction to all their Grievances and Complaints: After this, they declare the Reasons that moved them to this Protestation, and amongst others, say they, "That Christ our Lord, the King of Kings, thro' our Neglect or Lukewarmness, may want no Part of his Sovereignty and Dominion; and that in our Religion, which is more dear unto us than our Lives, we deceive not ourselves with that which cannot satisfy, &c." Then they take Notice of some Things in the Preamble to the King's Proclamation, as prejudicial to the Freedom of the intended Assembly; and they protest expressly against that Clause in the Proclamation, warning Archbishops and Bishops to be present as if they had Place and Voice there. They likewise protest against the Act and Proclamation, commanding the Bond framed in the Year 1589 to be signed: Amongst other weighty Reasons, they observe, That, by the subscribing of the said Bond, the Land would be involved in Perjury; in regard it would be a Departing from their Testimony lately given in the Bond that they had sworn and signed, whereby the National Covenant was accommodate to their present Circumstances, and wherein the Liturgy and Book of Canons were expressly condemned: They likewise observe, That the Bond 1589 was general, and nowise adapted to their present Circumstances. And here they have some beautiful Expressions upon the Use and Design of Confessions of Faith, which well deserve a Room here, *viz.* "What is the Use of March-stones upon Borders of Lands, the like Use hath *Confessions of Faith* in the Kirk, to determinate and divide betwixt Truth and Error; and the renewing and applying of *Confessions of Faith* to the present Errors and Corruptions, are not unlike ridding of Marches: And therefore, to content ourselves with the general, and to return to it, from the particular Application of the Confession, necessarily made, upon the Invasion, or creeping-in of Errors within the Borders of the Kirk, if it be not a Removing
" of

“ of the March-stone from the own Place, it is at least the
 “ Hiding of the March in the Ground that it be not seen,
 “ which at this Time were very unreasonable, &c.”
 After the said Protestation was read by Mr. *Archibald Johnston*, according to the printed Copy before me, Instruments were taken thereupon in the Hands of three publick Notars, and an Extract craved by the Earl of *Montrose* in Name of the Noblemen, by Mr. *Gibson* of *Durie* in Name of the Barons, by *George Porterfield* Burgeses of *Glasgow* in Name of the *Boroughs*, by Mr. *Henry Rollo* Minister at *Edinburgh* in Name of the Ministers, and by the said Mr. *Johnston* in Name of all who adhered to the *Confession of Faith* and *Covenant* lately renewed within this Kingdom; and a Copy of the Protestation was offered to the King's Herald.

The Presbyteries did now proceed to the Election of Commissioners for the ensuing General Assembly; and, according to the former Custom and Practice of Elections for free and lawful General Assemblies, Three or at least Two Ministers were chosen from every Presbytery, together with One Ruling Elder *. It is then a Mistake in the ingenuous *Rapine* †, who, following the *English* Historians, writes, “ That the *General Meetings* entred into a
 “ Resolve, that the Ruling Elders should exceed the
 “ Number of Ministers at this Assembly.” The *General Meetings* did only advise the Presbyteries to observe the laudable Acts and Constitutions of lawful Assemblies in their Election of Commissioners. I find from the *Latin* Historian ‡, that the constituent Members of the Assembly at *Glasgow* were 143 Ministers together with Professors from the *Universities*, and 95 Ruling Elders from the Presbyteries and Burghs. As the Burghs were very zealous at this Time, so there is no Doubt of their being well convened at this Assembly: I find, from the *Manuscript Journal*, that 48 Burghs were present by their Commissioners; and consequently there were only 47 Elders from the several Presbyteries: Hence 'tis evident, that the Proportion of Elders to Ministers was not by far so great at that Assembly from the several Presbyteries, as it is for ordinary in our Assemblies in the present Period.

The *General Meetings* came to a Resolution to libel and cite the Bishops to the Assembly at *Glasgow*. The *English* Historians give a very indistinct Account of the Manner of

* Hist. Mot. p. 77. *Guthrie's* Memoirs, p. 31. † Hist. Vol. I. p. 305. ‡ Hist. Mot. p. 294.

citing the Bishops; *Rapine*, following the *English Historians*, writes, that they were all cited by the Presbytery of *Edinburgh*: But the following Method was taken; Several Noblemen, Barons, Gentlemen and Ministers, who were not Commissioners to the General Assembly, gave in Informations against the Bishops, to the several Presbyteries in which they had their Residence; likewise the said Noblemen, &c. stated themselves Pursuers of the Bishops; and the Presbyteries, taking the Matter into their Consideration, referred the whole Cause unto the General Assembly, and in the mean Time agreed to cite the Bishops to the said Assembly. Such of them as were in the Country had their Libels put into their Hands; but in regard the most Part of them had fled the Country, and retired into *England*, the Libels were appointed to be read publickly on the Lord's Day in the Churches, and they were cited from the Pulpits to the Assembly that was to meet at *Glasgow*; and, according to *Rushworth*, the Libels were read in all the Churches of *Scotland*. In like Manner, several Presbyteries prepared Libels against such Ministers as had been scandalous in their Walk, or who had vented *Arminian* or *Popish* Doctrines, or who had read the Liturgy; and these were also cited to the General Assembly *.

Upon this remarkable Turn of Affairs, Mr. *Rutherford* was liberate from his Confinement at *Aberdeen*, and was chosen a Member of the Assembly at *Glasgow*: Likewise, several of the Prelatick Ministers having left their Charges and retired into *England*, some eminent Ministers, who had come over from *Ireland*, were immediately settled in their Parishes; such as Mr. *Blair*, Mr. *Livingstone* and others, who were also chosen Members of the said Assembly.

The General Assembly was opened at *Glasgow* on the 21st of *November*. That great Man, Mr. *Henderson* Minister at *Leuchars*, was chosen their Moderator. The *Marquis* of *Hamiltoun* presented the King's Commission, whereby he was appointed his Majesty's Commissioner to that Assembly, which was read, together with a Letter directed to them from the King. The first Six Sessions of the Assembly there was nothing done, but the Choice of their Moderator and Clerk, and the examining of the Commissions from the several Presbyteries and Burghs. The Commissioner endeavoured to embarrass them in all

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their

* Hist. Mot. p. 78, 79, 80.

their Proceedings, and protested against every Step of the same.

In the sixth Session of the Assembly, Doctor *Hamilton*, as their Procurator, gave in a Protestation against and Declinature of the Assembly, signed by Six of the Bishops, to which a few Ministers that were of their Party adhered. This Declinature, with the Reasons thereof, the Reader may see in *Rusworth's* Collections. I have not seen any Copy of the Assembly's Answers, but that which is in the *Latin* History; and there the curious Reader may find it.

At the following seventh Session, the Assembly approved the Registers of former free and lawful General Assemblies since the Reformation: Then they entred upon the Consideration of the Bishops *Declinature*; and after Deliberation on the same, and several Reasons offered to take off any Thing in their Declinature that could be alledged to have any Force or Weight, the Question was stated, Whether or not, notwithstanding of the said Declinature and Protestation, this Assembly was a free, lawful and right-constitute Assembly? And, when they were about to vote the said Question, the King's Commissioner, after a long Speech, told them that he could not any longer, in a Consistency with his Duty to his *Master*, countenance them; and therefore discharged them in the King's Name to sit any longer, and declared that any Thing done in the Assembly should be of no Force, and should not bind any of his Majesty's Subjects. The Assembly knowing very well that the *Commissioner* had a Design to dissolve their Meeting, a Protestation was prepared and in Readiness against this Event, which was now put into the Hands of the Clerk to be read; and, while this Protestation was reading, the Commissioner removed: And the next Day, *November* 29th, a Proclamation was made over the Cross of *Glasgow*, inhibiting and discharging the Assembly, under the Pain of Treason, to continue their Meeting; and also declaring all and whatsoever they should happen to do, to be null, and of no Force, Strength or Effect. After the above Proclamation was made, the Protestation which was read in the Assembly, and which they had approven, was likewise read at the Cross of *Glasgow* in Name of the Church of *Scotland*, and of all the Subscribers of the Covenant. The Reader will find both the Proclamation, and the Assembly's Protestation, in *Rusworth's* Collections for this Year. I shall only transcribe the Words with which
their

their Protestation is begun, viz. " We Commissioners from
 " Presbyteries, Burghs and Universities, now convened
 " in a free and full Assembly of the Church of Scotland,
 " indicted by his Majesty, and gathered together in the
 " Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the only Head and Mo-
 " narch of his own Church; and we Noblemen, Barons,
 " &c. Subscribers of the Confession of Faith, make it
 " known, &c." Likewise, by the King's Orders a Pro-
 clamation is made at *Edinburgh* the 18th of *December*, con-
 demning the General Assembly at *Glasgow* as an unlawful
 Meeting, and discharging all the Subjects, under the
 highest Pains, to acknowledge, or give Obedience to the
 pretended Acts and Constitutions of the Assembly now met
 at *Glasgow*; declaring their present Meetings and Acts to
 be illegal and unwarrantable, and prohibiting Sessions,
 Presbyteries and Ministers, either publicly or privately,
 in Conferences, Sermons, or any other Way, to authorise,
 approve, justify or allow the said unlawful Meeting or As-
 sembly at *Glasgow*, &c. This Proclamation at *Edinburgh*
 is answered with a long Protestation in Name of the As-
 sembly, and in Name of the Noblemen, Gentlemen, Bo-
 roughs, Ministers and Commons, Subscribers of the Cove-
 nant. The Protestation has the same Preamble with the
 former I have mentioned; and, in it, they justify their
 Proceedings, and give a full Answer to all the Particulars
 alledged against them in the King's Proclamation; they
 prove that they have Law on their Side in continuing to
 meet together, and take off the groundless Aspersions and
 Calumnies that were at this Time cast upon all their Pro-
 ceedings.

After the Commissioner had removed, the Moderator,
 according to the *Latin* Historian and the *Journal*, did
 speak to the Assembly in the following Manner; " All that
 " are here, know how this Assembly was indicted: And
 " albeit we have acknowledged the Power of Christian
 " Kings for convening Assemblies, and their Power in
 " them; yet that must not derogate from Christ's Right;
 " for he hath given Warrant to convocate Assemblies, whe-
 " ther Magistrates consent or not: Therefore, seeing we
 " perceive Men to be zealous of their Masters Commands,
 " have not we as good Reason to be zealous toward our
 " Lord, and to maintain the Liberties and Privileges of
 " his Kingdom? You all know, that the Work in Hand
 " hath had many Difficulties, and God hath born us
 " through them all to this Day; therefore it becometh not

“ us now to be discouraged for any Thing that hath inter-
 “ veen’d, but rather to double our Courage, when we
 “ seem to be deprived of human Authority.”

The Moderator, having thus spoke to the Assembly, desired some others to speak: Whereupon Mr. *David Dickson* rose up, and said, “ Ye all understand that the
 “ great Work now in Hand hath been carried on from
 “ small Beginnings; for at the first we intended only to
 “ exoner ourselves, and to leave a Testimony to Posterity
 “ that we bear Witness to Christ’s oppressed Cause. We
 “ thought the Cause desperate, when we were charged to
 “ buy the Service-books under the Pain of Horning; yet
 “ we gave in Supplications to the *Council*, desiring them
 “ to hear us speak against such Proceedings: And, when
 “ we knew not what to do next, God hath led us on Step
 “ by Step, keeping us still within the Compass of his
 “ Word, and Laws of this Kingdom, for any Thing we
 “ know; and we have only followed our Cause, with
 “ humble Supplications to our King, and Protestations a-
 “ gainst that which we could not obey: And it is evi-
 “ dent that God hath accepted our Testimony, for his
 “ Hands are about us still; for, if his Eye had not di-
 “ rected us, and his Hand had not guided us, we had
 “ long since been confounded in our Wits, and could
 “ have done nothing for the Compassing of this great
 “ Work more than young Children; neither could we
 “ have continued in one Mind to this Day. He is now to
 “ crave a solemn Testimony of the Kirk of *Scotland*, and
 “ to ask of every Man, Who is his God? And we have
 “ clearly represented unto us a Lesson of our Fidelity
 “ to our Lord and Master, from my *Lord Commissioner*;
 “ he hath stood punctually to the least Jot of his Com-
 “ mission, and it becometh us to be as zealous and loyal
 “ to our God. Therefore, seeing this Court is granted
 “ to us of God, under our King, and with his Allowance,
 “ and a Parliament indicted to warrant all the Conclu-
 “ sions of it; and now, that he hath drawn back his gran-
 “ ted Warrant, shall we for this be disloyal to our God,
 “ and slide from that which he hath granted? If we go
 “ not on, we shall prove Traitors both to God and to our
 “ King; or, if we be silent and pass from this Assembly,
 “ how shall the Will of God be demonstrated to our King
 “ in Things controverted? There is not a Mean to inform
 “ our King fully and clearly, but the Determinations of
 “ this Assembly; Therefore we must now proceed, and
 “ so

“ so proceed, as all our Proceedings must answer for
 “ themselves ; that it may be seen that we have proceed-
 “ ed as good Subjects to God and our King. We must
 “ either go on, or take upon us all the Imputations of
 “ scandalous and turbulent Persons, and grant that there
 “ have been as many Wrongs as there have been false Im-
 “ putations laid out against us ; and this were to sin more
 “ deeply, and to quit these glorious Privileges which
 “ Christ hath granted unto us above all our Sister Churches.
 “ Seeing there is not a Mean to clear ourselves before the
 “ Christian World but this, let us go on in putting over
 “ the Matter upon our Lord and Master, and he shall
 “ answer for us at the Court of Heaven, and justify us in
 “ the Eyes of all that are wise.” I have transcribed the
 above Speeches as they ly in the *Journal*. There were se-
 veral other Ministers who likewise spake to the same Pur-
 pose : These Speeches did put Life and Courage, not on-
 ly into the Members of Assembly, but also into a Multi-
 tude of Spectators that were present ; amongst whom, as
 the *Latin Historian* * and the *Journal* report, was Lord
Erskine, Son to the noble Earl of *Marr*, then a Member
 of the Privy Council, who came into the Assembly, “ and
 “ with Tears besought that he might be admitted to sign
 “ the Covenant and Confession : He ingenuously confessed,
 “ that his Conscience frequently checked him, as also ad-
 “ monished him, that with the first Opportunity he should
 “ join himself to such a good Cause ; and having hither-
 “ to neglected to do so, *said he*, he perceived God was
 “ angry with him, and therefore desired their Prayers on
 “ his Behalf to the Lord, that his Anger might be turned
 “ away from him.” Many others followed the Example
 of this noble Youth. The above Historian adds, that
 “ the whole Assembly looked upon it as a certain Evi-
 “ dence of the Divine Countenance, that, when they were
 “ afraid that many should be intimidate and discouraged,
 “ and that they should turn their Back upon the Cause,
 “ yet at this very Moment the Hearts of some were so
 “ much confirmed, that being moved as it were of God,
 “ and despising all Dangers, they besought to be received
 “ into the Covenant.” Then the Moderator put the Que-
 stion, (according to the *Journal*) Whether they would ad-
 here to the Protestation newly read, and continue, tho’
 the Assembly was now discharged ? And the Assembly
 all in on Voice, except *six* or *seven*, declared solemnly,
 that

* Hist. Mot. p. 110.

that with all their Hearts they adhered unto their Protestation ; and that they resolved to continue, till this Assembly (after the settling of all Matters) be dissolved by the common Consent of the Members thereof. The same Thing is also reported upon the Matter by the *Latin Historian*. After this the Moderator put the following Question, If, notwithstanding of the Bishops Protestation and Declinature, this Assembly should hold themselves lawful or competent Judges of the Bishops? According to the *Latin Historian*, the Vote in the *Affirmative* was unanimous ; according to the *Journal*, three or four vote in the *Negative*.

The Earl of *Argyll*, who was afterwards *Marquis*, tho' he was a Member of Privy Council, and tho' he was not a Member of the Assembly, continued to attend all the Sessions thereof ; and he expressed his Desire to hear the Reasonings and Judgment of the Assembly concerning *Episcopacy*, and the five Articles of *Perth* : And, when the Assembly determined that they were contrary to our National Confession of Faith, he declared his Satisfaction with, and Submission unto, their Determination. This noble Peer did here begin to distinguish himself, by a Concern for the Redeemer's Glory, and for his Spiritual Kingdom ; and he continued stedfast unto the End, dying a Martyr for the Lord's Cause and Testimony which he now espoused. Likewise, in the eighth Session of the Assembly several others of the Nobility expressed themselves after the same Manner with the Earl of *Argyll* ; and upon this Occasion, according to the *Journal*, the Moderator said, " Tho' we had not a Nobleman to assist us, our Cause were not the worse nor the weaker ; but there is Occasion given us to bless God, that they are coming in daily in Throngs." The Noblemen, and others that were Pursuers of the Bishops, insisted at this Session, that the Assembly might proceed to try and judge the Bishops ; and the Libel against the Bishop of *Galloway* was read, and delayed till another Session : And the Assembly having discussed the Processes against the Bishops in many Sessions, as the printed Acts bear, the most of them were deposed and excommunicate ; four of them were deposed *simpliciter*, and two of them from their pretended Episcopal Function, upon the Grounds and Reasons that are laid down in the printed Acts. In their twelfth Session, the Assembly find and declare the Assemblies at *Linlithgow* 1606 and 1608, at *Glasgow* 1610, at *Aberdeen* 1616, at

St. Andrews 1617, and at *Perth* 1618, upon the Grounds and Reasons mentioned in their printed Acts, to have been from the Beginning unfree, unlawful and null Assemblies, and never to have had, nor hereafter to have any Ecclesiastical Authority. In the thirteenth Session, they condemn the Oaths exacted by the Prelates of Intrants into the holy Ministry, as *unlawful*. In the fourteenth Session, the *Service-book*, the *Book of Canons and Ordination*, are all condemned by the Assembly, as contrary to our Confession of Faith; and the *High Commission Court* is declared to be *unlawful* in itself, and prejudicial unto the Liberties of Christ's Kingdom. In the sixteenth Session, the Assembly most unanimously, and with the Hesitation of one only, find and declare, that all Episcopacy, different from that of a Pastor over a particular Flock, was abjured by the Confession of Faith as it was sworn in the Years 1580, and 1581, and 1590; and therefore, that it ought to be removed out of the Kirk. After this unanimous Sentence was passed, according to the *Journal*, the Moderator had the following Speech, which deserves a Room here; " I think, *says he*, there be none of us here, but have been oftentimes calling upon the Name of God in secret and openly, that he, and he only who was able to do it, would have been pleased to stay the Course of Defection that was going so fast on; and I think there be none of us that did not earnestly desire and wish to have seen a Day to have taken it to Consideration, whether we had transgressed the Covenant of God or not, in going on in a Course of Defection: And now he hath granted this Day wherein we may call all Matters to a Reckoning, which Day we much longed for; and many a Time have I myself besought God to stop this Course of Defection, and so he hath done. Many are the Miseries, Burdens and Calamities that have been upon this poor Kirk these Years by-gone; and we were scorned by others, that it was for the breaking of Covenant with God; and we trust it shall appear to the World when we are dead, that we have turned unto him, and renewed it again. It rests now that we be thankful unto our Lord for the same. And I trust that there are none of us that are come here with an honest Mind, but they would have bought this Day at a dear Rate, and given a dear Price for this Voting, which God hath done far beyond our Deserving or Expectation. And our Adversaries need not

“ to say that it was the Votes of a Number of Gentlemen
 “ and Elders that carried all away; but, blessed be God,
 “ the Ministers, and every one present here, with great
 “ Unanimity have gone together without any Contra-
 “ diction; which is a Matter of Admiration and Won-
 “ der, for the which we know not what we shall render
 “ unto our gracious Lord: Therefore we will not med-
 “ dle with any other Purpose now, but go altogether,
 “ and give Thanks heartily to our Lord for this Harmo-
 “ ny.” Here the Reader may see the Moderator, who
 was the Mouth of this Assembly, acknowledging in pa-
 thetick Terms their transgressing the Covenant of the
 Lord their God, and also a Course of Defection and
 Backsliding from him, by the rearing up of Prelacy before
 the Year 1638.

In the 17th Session of this Assembly, the five Articles
 of *Perth* are declared to be abjured by the National Cove-
 nant, as it was sworn in the Years 1580 & 1590. This was
 also a particular Acknowledgment, that the Land was in-
 volved in Breach of Covenant, in so far as the said Articles
 had been practised or complied with. In the 21st Session,
 the Assembly remembring that they stand obliged, by
 their *solemn Oath and Covenant with God*, to return to the
 Doctrine and Discipline of this Kirk, restore *Kirk-sessions*,
 Provincial and National Assemblies, to their Privileges,
 Liberties, Powers and Jurisdictions, as they were consti-
 tute by the *second Book of Discipline*. In the 28th Session,
 the Assembly assert, That this National Church hath *Di-*
vine as well as Ecclesiastick and Civil Warrants, to con-
 veen in her yearly General Assemblies, and oftner as Oc-
 casion and Necessity shall require. The Preamble to this
 Act mentions, That the Assembly having considered the
 Reasons lately printed for holding General Assemblies
 (which I noticed above) these Reasons are taken from the
 Light of Nature, the Promise of Jesus Christ, the Pra-
 ctice of the holy Apostles, the Doctrine and Custom of
 other reformed Kirks, &c. Here the Reader may notice,
 that the Supremacy, as it was claimed and exercised at this
 Time by the Civil Powers, did mainly and chiefly respect
 the King's sole Power of indicting General Assemblies;
 there was nothing of that Power exercised or claimed
 which was given unto the King in the Years 1662 and
 1663, when it was declared, that the Ordering and Dispo-
 sal of the external Government and Policy of the Church
 doth properly belong to the King, as an inherent Right
 of

of the Crown, &c.* The Reader may likewise observe, that the above Act of Assembly is directly and expressly laid against the Supremacy, as it was claimed and exercised before the Year 1638; and consequently, this Assembly gave a free and faithful Testimony, by their said Act, for the Rights and Privileges of the Kingdom of Christ, against the Supremacy as it was then claimed and exercised. The Assembly in that same Session give yet a further Testimony for our covenanted Reformation, when they prohibite and discharge any of the Members of this Church to swear or subscribe our National Confession of Faith, according to the Sense imposed upon it by the *King*, who had caused publish a Declaration, bearing, That he did not intend nor design by his Commands requiring the said Confession to be signed, with the Bond 1580 subjoined, (which I have mentioned above) thereby to abjure, but to defend, Episcopal Government; this the Assembly declared to be directly repugnant to the genuine and true Meaning of the said Confession, as it was professed in the Years 1580, &c. And by their Act, Session 26. they appoint the Confession and Covenant should be afterwards subscribed according to the Determination of the said free and lawful General Assembly at *Glasgow*.

Besides the Processes brought before this Assembly against the Bishops, there were also Processes laid before them from Presbyteries against several Ministers, either for reading the Liturgy, or for other scandalous Practices; and many of them were deposed from the Ministry, such as Doctor *Hamilton* Minister at *Glasford* Procurator for the Bishops, Doctor *Panther* Professor of Divinity at *St. Andrews*, Mr. *Mitchel* Minister at *Edinburgh*, and Mr. *Gladstones* at *St. Andrews*, with several others, as the Reader may see from the *Latin History*. The same Historian likewise reports †, That, before Censure was past upon the Teachers of *Arminianism* and other corrupt Doctrine, Mr. *David Dickson* and Mr. *Robert Baillie* (and, according to the *Journal*, some others) had learned Discourses before the Assembly upon the several Points of *Arminianism*, proving their Contrariety to the holy Scriptures and our received Doctrine. The Assembly likewise give eight Commissions to several Ministers, who were appointed to meet at the Places named in the several Acts, for trying and judging Ministers or Professors in the Colleges

K k

who

* *Char. 2. Parl. 2. Sess. 2. Act 1.*

† *Hist. Mot. p. 199.*

who were guilty of Error, or who had submitted to the Liturgy, and who refused to submit to the Acts and Constitutions of this Assembly, or who were otherwise scandalous in their Practice. And, among the last Things done by this Assembly, a solemn Thanksgiving was appointed to be observed through all the Churches in this Land, for the Success that the Lord had given unto them. There are two excellent Speeches at the Conclusion of this Assembly, the one by the Moderator, the other by Mr. *David Dickson*, wherein the Rise and Progress of this great Work of God are mentioned with Thankfulness to the Lord; I dare not swell this Book with giving even the Heads of them. Likewise, at the Moderator's Desire, the Earl of *Argyll* spoke to excellent Purpose. Then the Assembly was concluded with Prayer and Singing of the 133d Psalm; and they all parted with the greatest Harmony and Joy.

I have now given an Account, tho' but a very short and imperfect one, of that glorious Appearance of the Lord for this Church in the Year 1638. The want of a full and faithful History of this wonderful Turn, is a very considerable Loss unto this Church; and I am perswaded, that the Author of the *Essay*, if he had been acquainted with the History of this Period, would not have treated the Assembly 1638 in the Manner he has done. Before I close this Section, I shall, to prevent Repetition, take notice of some considerable Differences betwixt the Proceedings of this Church in the Year 1638, and the Managements of all Ranks of Persons, and particularly of the General Assembly 1690; and that because the *Associate Presbytery* in their *judicial Act and Testimony*, p. 38, 39, &c. make mention of some considerable Omissions at the Revolution; as also because the Author of the *Essay*, p. 126, 127, &c. endeavours to vindicate these Omissions, and represents this Church as more faithful at the Revolution than in her former Period. I do not judge it needful to pursue our Author in all the Particulars that he alleges against the Assembly 1638, some of which he repeats over and over again, and always in a Manner very diminutive of our reforming Period. And, before I enter upon Particulars, I must observe, That when the *Associate Presbytery*, in their *Act and Testimony*, p. 37. make mention of the Year 1688, they speak of the Revolution that Year as a *glorious and surprising Appearance of God for us*, and they had good Reason to do so; as likewise, they judge

judge it their Duty to *commemorate with Thankfulness the Divine Power and Goodness manifested in this wonderful Work* : It was a Work of God, which ought to be remembred to the latest Posterity ; it was a Work, whereby Deliverance was given us from Tyranny and Slavery, and whereby a Stop was put to an Inundation of *Popish* Idolatry and Superstition : Yet the Presbytery do justly observe, that it is to be regreted that this valuable Season was neglected, and that the Deliverance that was given us was not suitably improvén. *Tho' he saved us for his Name's Sake, yet we provoked him at the Sea, even at the Red-Sea : we forgot his Works, and waited not for his Counsel.* From the historical Account I have given, the Reader may observe the following Things ;

1st, The Lord's Work, in the Year 1638, was carried on with Fasting, deep Humiliation and Mourning, and Acknowledgments made by all Ranks of Persons of the Breach of our National Covenant: *Scotland* at that Time might be called *Bochim*, or a Place of Mourners ; the Voice of Weeping and Supplication was heard amongst us, because we had perverted our Way, and forgotten the Lord our God. But, in the Year 1688, the *Estates* of the Nation were more concerned in securing their Civil Liberties, than in appearing for the *Rights* and *Liberties* of the Kingdom of Christ, or in laying seriously to Heart their hainous Perfidy and Treachery in Breach of Covenant, tho' this was highly aggravate above what it was in the Period before 1638 : Neither did the Ministry of the Church, in their judicative Capacity, lay home the particular Instances of their Perfidy and Treachery unto the *Estates* of the Kingdom, in order to stir them up to Humiliation and Mourning before the Lord.

2^{dly}, As all Ranks of Persons in the Land were sensible of their hainous Defections and Backslidings, in the Year 1638 ; so the Representatives of this Church, when they met in the General Assembly the said Year, they came together under a Sense of the same : And, when some doubted if *Episcopacy* and the five Articles of *Perth* were abjured by our National Confession as it was sworn in the Year 1581, the Assembly fully satisfied many that were in the Dark upon this important Question, and a general Submission through the Land was given unto the Determinations of the General Assembly in this Point. Further, Were not all the Proceedings of this Assembly, with respect to *Episcopacy*, the five Articles of *Perth*, the Oaths of *Intrants*,

with others that I have mentioned, a particular and express Condemning of their National Steps of Defection? As for what is affirmed by our Author, that there were no Fasts appointed in the Years 1638 or 1639; he ought to have known, that the Work was carried on with Fasting and Humiliation, and that the Assembly 1638 had Ground for appointing a solemn Thanksgiving for the great Things the Lord had done for them. And whereas he asserts, p. 136. That, when a National Fast is appointed in the Year 1642, they were far from being so particular as the Assembly 1690; He might likewise have known, that the Assembly 1638 did particularly and expressly condemn, as is above observed, the Steps of Defection and Backsliding that had taken Place before that Time: But, in the Act appointing the Fast 1690, there is no particular nor express Mention of any Steps of Defection as contrary to our National Confession of Faith, or our Solemn League and Covenant. When they mention the Alteration of the Government of the Church, they say, That " Prelacy was introduced " without the Church's Consent, and contrary to standing " Acts of our National Assemblies;" but do not declare that it ought to be mourned over, as contrary to our National Oath and Confession of Faith. But it is declared by the Mouth of the Assembly 1638 to be a Transgressing of the Covenant of the Lord, and acknowledged as a Course of Defection from him. It is likewise told in the said Act 1690, that much innocent Blood had been shed; but they never tell that it was the Blood of Witnesses for the Testimony of Jesus that was shed. Innocent Blood may be shed in a Land by Tumults, in Robberies, and in Quarrels, and many other Ways: Therefore Posterity can never know what innocent Blood is intended by the said Act of Assembly. If our Author would give Credit unto the late Reverend Mr. *Hog*, to whose Authority he frequently appeals, he tells us in his Life writ by himself, That after the happy Revolution, under the specious Names of Prudence and just Moderation, the Testimony of former Times was suppressed; and that it was not thought a proper Season to intermeddle with our Covenants, or Defections from them, that we might not give the least Umbrage to those that were in the Government, many of whom were not of our Principles, and some had been amongst the Leaders in the former Persecution. Our Author, p. 135. when he speaks concerning the Complaint made against the Church at the Revolution, for not being more particular

in acknowledging Steps of Defection in Church and State he answers, That some Things reckoned Steps of Defection were debatable Points; "but, for other Defection in which they were clear, they have not been so filed as is alledged." And, for Proof of this, he tells us That in the Act of Assembly 1690 they expressly confessed "the late great and general Defection of this Church and Kingdom;" also "too general a Fainting under the great Defection, not only amongst Professors, but also amongst Ministers, yea, even amongst such who in the main Thing did endeavour to maintain their Integrity in not giving seasonable and necessary Testimony against the Defections and Evils of the Time, and keeping due Distance from them." But, why does not our Author add what follows? *viz.* "And some on the other Hand managed their Zeal with too little Discretion and Meekness." But what is in all this express Confession that our Author speaks of? We are told of Defection great and general Defections, Fainting, indiscreet Zeal but what these Defections were, we are not told. Mr. Ho in his Life tells us, when speaking of the above-mentioned Complaint, "It is true, several publick Sins were then controverted; yet sure there were many Sins beyond Dispute, and the Confession of these was neglected through carnal Prudence and Man-pleasing."

3dly, This whole Church and Land returned unto the Lord in the Year 1638, by a solemn Renovation of their National Covenant accommodated to their Situation and Circumstances at that Time: Thereby she not only made a solemn Profession and Confession of her God, in Opposition unto the Dishonours that were done him, and the Indignities that were offered unto the Ordinances of his Institution, with respect to the Government, Discipline and Worship of his House; but also she did, with the same Solemnity, acknowledge and avouch the several Articles of Faith laid down from the Word of God in our Confessions of Faith. But, at the Revolution, the National Church of *Scotland* was not a Covenanting Church; she made no such solemn Profession or Confession of the Truths and Ordinances of her God, in Opposition unto a highly aggravated Violation and Profanation of them for the Space of Twentyeight Years of unparalleled Apostasy and Defection.

4thly, The Assembly 1638, in their sixteenth Session, expressly condemn Episcopacy, as contrary to the Word of

f God and our National Confession of Faith: But nothing like this was done by the Assembly 1690. This Omission was attended with several special Aggravations: As for Instance, The Testimony of the Church of *Scotland* had been stated more particularly and expressly against Prelacy in the Year 1638 than formerly, when the said Assembly declared Prelacy to be abjured by our National Covenant, and when the Covenant, according to this express Declaration, was afterwards sworn and subscribed by all Ranks of Persons through the Land; hence the above Omission in 1690 was a Dropping a material Part of the Testimony of this Church, which had been stated in such a particular and express Manner. Likewise, Episcopacy in its Form and Model was far more tyrannical as it was reared up by our *Scots* Parliament in the Year 1662, than it was in the Period before the Year 1638: For, as I have already observed, the Assembly at *Glasgow* 1610, which brought in Episcopacy into the Church, did not allow of the Bishop as a distinct Officer from preaching Elders; neither did the Parliament 1612, which ratified the Proceedings of *Glasgow* Assembly, consider the Bishop as a distinct Office from Presbyters: But when Prelacy is reared up in the Year 1662, as Mr. *Woodrow* in his History observes *, “ Not only a *Negative*, but likewise a *Positive* is given him; and all Church Power and Government is lodged in his sole Person.” Hence Episcopacy was not only considered as a distinct Office from Presbyters, but upon the Matter the Bishop is constitute the sole Officer in the House of God. Therefore the Omission of the Assembly 1690 was still more aggravated, in regard the Order and Government of the House of God in *Scotland* had been much more subverted in the Period before 1688, than in that before the Year 1638. Likewise, by the rearing up of Prelacy in the Year 1662, the Land was more deeply involved in Perjury than in the Period before 1638; in regard it was a Breach, not only of the National Covenant as it was explained by the Assembly 1638, but also of the *Solemn League* and Covenant, which both the King and all Ranks of Persons in *Scotland* had sworn with great Solemnity. When all these Things are considered, 'tis very manifest, that the above Omission at the Revolution was attended with special and hainous Aggravations.

It is likewise justly complained, *Act and Testimony*, p. 40. that the Assembly 1690 did not assert the Divine Right:

Right of Presbytery. Unto this the Author of the *Essay* makes Answer, *Essay* p. 129. "If this Omission was ;
 " Fault in the Church of *Scotland* at the Revolution, the
 " it was much her Fault in 1638: For tho' that Assembl
 " condemned *Episcopacy*, as having no Foundation in God
 " Word, and as being contrary unto it, yet they have n
 " express Word of *Presbytery* as being founded upon th
 " Word of God, tho' I suppose it was their Judgmen
 " as 'tis well known it was the Judgment of the Churc
 " of *Scotland* at the *Revolution*; and when by their Ad
 " restoring the Judicatories of this Church to their forme
 " Privileges, of *December* 17th 1638, according to the
 " printed Acts, they restored them only as they were con
 " stitute by the *Book of Policy*, without any express men
 " tion of *the Divine Right of Presbytery*." Our Author has
 a good deal of Assurance, or (if I may use his own Dia
 lect) he is guilty of an unaccountable Imposition upon the
World, when he affirms, That the Assembly 1638 have no
 express Word of *Presbytery* as being founded upon the
 Word of God. In the Preamble to that Act of Assem
 bly condemning *Episcopacy*, they say, "The Assembly ta
 " king to their most grave and serious Consideration, first
 " the unspeakable Goodness, and great Mercy of God,
 " manifested to this Nation, in that so necessary, so diffi
 " cult, and so excellent and divine Work of Reformation
 " was at last brought to such Perfection, that this Kirk
 " was reformed, not only in Doctrine and Worship, but
 " also after many Conferences and publick Reasonings in
 " diverse National Assemblies, joined with solemn Humi
 " liations and Prayers to God, the Discipline and Govern
 " ment of the Kirk, as the Hedge and Guard of the
 " Doctrine and Worship, was prescribed according to the
 " Rule of God's Word, in the Book of Policy and Disci
 " pline, agreed upon in the Assembly 1578, and insert in
 " the Register 1581, established by the Acts of Assemblies,
 " by the Confession of Faith, sworn and subscribed at the
 " Direction of the Assembly, and by the continual Pra
 " ctice of this Kirk." Is not our Presbyterianial Church
 government and Discipline expressly laid down from the
 Word of God in our Book of Discipline? And, is it not
 expressly asserted by the Assembly 1638, in the above
 Words of their Act, That the said Government and Dis
 cipline was prescribed according to the Rule of God's
 Word, after many Conferences and many Reasonings,
 joined with solemn Humiliations and Prayers? As also,
 that

at the same Government and Discipline was sworn and subscribed, at the Direction of the Assembly, and by continual Practice of this Kirk; and likewise, 'tis asserted, that the Government and Discipline, laid down in the said Book, was a Part of that necessary, difficult, excellent and divine Work of Reformation, whereby this Church was at last brought to a considerable Perfection. Our Author should alledge, that the Word *Presbytery* not mentioned in the above Preamble, I believe every Person of Judgment would despise it as a silly Evasion; besides, any Body that reads the Act of Assembly condemning Episcopacy, will see, that the whole Tenor of that Act asserts the Divine *Right of Presbytery*. And in the Act cited by our Author, restoring the Judicatories of the Church to their former Privileges, in their Preamble to the said Act, the said Assembly express themselves in the following Terms; "And clearly perceiving the Benefit that will redound to Religion, by the Restitution of the said Judicatories; remembring also, that they stand obliged, by their solemn Oath and Covenant with God, to return to the Doctrine and Discipline of this Kirk, as it was professed in the Years 1580, &c." Our Author therefore greatly misrepresents this Assembly, when he asserts they restored the said Judicatories, *only* as they were constitute by the *Book of Policy*; for the Assembly did restore them on account of the Benefit that would redound to Religion thereby, as also from a Sense of the Obligation they were under by their solemn Oath and Covenant to return to their Duty; and this was a plain Acknowledgment likewise, that they and the whole Land had generally departed from their Duty to the Lord. Further, the said Judicatories were constitute, by the *Book of Policy*, upon the Footing of the Divine Right and Warrant for them, as has been already observed.

5thly, The Supremacy usurped before the Year 1638 was not only practically condemned by all the Proceedings of the Assembly that Year, but likewise the Rights of Christ's Spiritual Kingdom were expressly asserted, in Opposition to the Supremacy as it was exercised before the said Year 1638; and particularly, in their Act, Session 26th, concerning yearly General Assemblies, the Assembly expressly declare, "That this National Kirk hath Power and Liberty, by Divine, Ecclesiastical and Civil Warrants, to convene in her yearly General Assemblies, &c." But nothing like this was done by the Assembly.

1690. It has been justly complained that this Church at the *Revolution* never asserted her intrinsick Power. To this our Author answers, p. 131. That “the Church of *Scotland* hath declared for it (*says he*) I know not how often, by injoining all her Ministers and Elders to subscribe our Confession of Faith; whereby they have asserted the intrinsick Power of the Church.” And, for Proof of their asserting the intrinsick Power of the Church, he cites Chap. 31. Arr. 2. which he transcribes; and then he adds, “If this be not a sufficient Asserting hereof (*viz.* of the Church’s intrinsick Power) then the *Westminster* Assembly hath been defective.” But our Author might have known, that the General Assembly of this Church *Anno* 1647, in their Act approving the Confession of Faith, did not think the foresaid Article contained a sufficient Assertion of the intrinsick Power of the Church, for convening in her Synodical Assemblies Provincial or National; and therefore in their said Act they receive the Confession of Faith, with a Declaration upon, and Explication of, the above-mentioned second Article of the 31st Chap. of our Confession, wherein they assert the Power of the Church as it had been asserted by the Assembly 1638. Our Author in the forecited Page observes, that the State ratified the Confession of Faith *Anno* 1689 (he should have said, *Anno* 1690) Act 5th *June* 7th. And he adds, Mr. *Woodrow* says, “This was a Step of Reformation never before attained to in *Scotland*, whereby the scriptural and pure Doctrine of this Church is embodied with our Civil Liberties.” But here that excellent Historian Mr. *Woodrow* is mistaken: For our first Confession of Faith, which likewise contained the scriptural and pure Doctrine of this Church, was as much embodied with our Civil Liberties as the *Westminster* Confession of Faith, in regard our first Confession was approven by the *Parliament* 1560; it is approven again by Act of *Parliament* *December* 15th 1567, and insert in the said Act at large, together with the Scripture-quotations, which was something more than was done by the Act of *Parliament* 1690. Likewise, the Estates of *Parliament*, in their Act *February* 7th 1649, do ratify and approve the *Westminster* Confession of Faith, the *Larger* and *Shorter Catechisms*, and *Acts of Assembly* approving the same; this was also something more than was done by the *Parliament* 1690. The said *Parliament* did indeed leave the Acts of *Parliament* 1649, and the other Acts of that Period, buried under the *Act Rescissory*; and

therefore they made an Act of their own, with respect unto our Confession of Faith. The Author of the *Essay*, p. 129. observes, That in our Confession of Faith, Chap. 30 Art 1. 'tis asserted, *That the Lord Jesus is the Head of his Church*; and that the Commission of Assembly 1698 assert, "That Jesus Christ is the only Head and King of his Church;" and that the same Thing is asserted by the Assembly 1705, in their Act anent Mr. *Hepburn*: Hence he concludes, That "the Brethren in asserting, p. 40. of their *Act and Testimony*, that the Church of Scotland, neither in 1690, nor in any of her Assemblies since, hath asserted Christ to be, what really he is, the alone Supreme Head and King over his Church; they assert that which is not Fact." But, if our Author had not quoted the Words of the *Act and Testimony* after his ordinary partial Manner, the Reader might have seen, that he unjustly loads them with the Charge of asserting what is not Fact. The Words of the *Act and Testimony* are; "Neither the foresaid Assembly 1690, nor any of the Assemblies of the Church since that Time, did, by any one formal Act or Statute, explicitly and judicially condemn the sacrilegious Usurpation of his Royal Dignity, by that blasphemous Supremacy arrogated during that bloody Period; nor asserted him to be, what he really is, the alone Supreme King and Head over his Church as his free and independent Kingdom." If our Author can shew any formal Act of Assembly condemning the foresaid sacrilegious Usurpation, or that Supremacy that was arrogate by the King in the late persecuting Times, then he may charge the *Associate Presbytery* with asserting what is not Matter of Fact; or if he can shew any formal Act of Assembly, expressly and judicially asserting the alone Supreme Headship of the Lord Jesus over his Church, and the Freedom of his Spiritual Kingdom, then he may also charge the *Associate Presbytery* with asserting what is not Fact. The grossest *Erastians* will subscribe to the above Proposition of the Commission of the General Assembly 1698 according to their own Sense and Meaning of it, yea, so may the Pope of Rome himself, who pretends to be Christ's Vicar and Depute upon Earth, viz. *That the Lord Jesus is the alone King and Head of his Church*; and yet at the same Time they all divest Christ's Spiritual Kingdom of its Freedom, and the *Erastians* subordinate the same to the Civil Powers. 'Tis plain, that the *Presbytery*, in the above

Words

Words, assert the Neglect of a proper Testimony for the alone Headship of Christ, *in Opposition* to the wicked Encroachments that the Powers of the Earth had made upon the same. Our Author further observes, p. 127. That the *General Assembly* 1690 " mentions the Supremacy as one of the Causes of Fasting; for, speaking of the Sins of former Times under Prelacy, they say, The Supremacy was advanced in such a Way, and to such a Height, as never any Christian Church acknowledged: And this is more than was done by any Assembly from 1638 to 1649: This was a plain Condemning of the King's Supremacy, &c." But this was so far from being a plain Condemning of the Supremacy as it was exercised before 1688, that any who read the foresaid Act can never know what Branch of the Supremacy they intended. It was far from the Faithfulness of the Assembly 1638, who, as I observed before, both practically and expressly condemned the Supremacy as it was exercised at that Time: And besides, the Assemblies betwixt 1638 and 1649 could not expressly condemn the Supremacy as it was exercised before 1688, because, as I have already observed, it was never advanced to such a Height from the Reformation to their Times. Our Author adds, But " some, as the Brethren in their second *Testimony*, p. 41. will say, This (*viz.* what is said in the Act 1690) " was not an absolute Condemning of all Supremacy in " Civil Rulers over the Church." Here our Author, after his ordinary Manner, curtails the Words of the Brethren in their *Act and Testimony*: Their Words are, " Yet they (*viz.* the Assembly 1690) do not absolutely " condemn that usurped Supremacy, nor expressly assert " the Headship and Sovereignty of Christ, *in Opposition* " to the above-mentioned bold and daring Invasions made " upon it in the late Times of lamentable Defection and " grievous Persecution." This our Author cannot refuse; but he quibbles, when he tells us of Disputes about the Oath of Supremacy among good and learned Men: And therefore he mentions Mr. Gillespie in his *Miscellanies* making mention of such Disputes; he also quotes *Burroughs*, and the Ministers of the Province of *London*. But the Reader may easily perceive, that all his Citations are nothing to the Purpose: For none of them do either treat of the Supremacy as it was exercised in *Scotland* before the 1688; neither is it asserted by any of his Authors, that there have been great Disputes among good and learned

learned Men about the Supremacy as it was exercised in Scotland betwixt the Years 1662 and 1688. Our Author proceeds, p. 128. to give his own Judgment concerning the Power of the Civil Magistrate in the Church, or at least to tell us what he thinks all Presbyterian Divines own, viz. " That the King hath not a *Dogmatick*, nor " *Didactick*, nor *Diacritick* Power, so as to make new Ar- " ticles of Faith, to set up any new Kind of Worship, " to license or ordain Men to preach the Gospel, nor to " preach or administer the Sacraments, nor to exercise " Church-discipline, nor determine in Controversies of " Religion, nor to make Church Canons and Constituti- " ons, nor to depose Ministers from any Part of their " Office." I shall not take it upon me to explain our Author's *School-Terms*, or to enquire into the Sense and Import of what he calls a *Diacritick Power*; but I must observe, that our Author does not give us a full Enumeration of what our *Presbyterian* Divines refuse unto the Civil Magistrate. As for the particular Instances above given by our Author, the *Erastians* will own, that the most of them do not belong to the Civil Magistrate. See Mr. Gillespie's *Aaron's Rod*, Book 2. Chap. 3. He adds, That our *Presbyterian* Divines own, " that the Magi- " strate has not only a defensive, but a regulating ruling " Power, and also a coercive Power; having much Power " *circa sacra*, tho' no Power *in sacris*, no Power that is " properly, formally and intrinsically Ecclesiastical, his " Power being only Civil." But I wish our Author would explain himself concerning this *regulating ruling Power*: Tho' he asserts, that he is giving us the Judgment of all *Presbyterian* Divines; yet he has not mentioned any one of them, who express themselves in the above Terms without some Caution or Limitation; and I humbly judge that they have such an *Erastian Savour*, that they need some Explication. As also, when our Author tells us that the Magistrate has *much Power circa sacra*, this likewise needs some Explication: For tho' our *Presbyterian* Divines own that the Magistrate has a Power *circa sacra*, yet they always limit and qualify this Power. I am afraid that under the Terms, *much Power*, and *ruling regulating Power*, the most Part of what the *Erastians* plead for may be included, and, amongst others, the Subordination of Church-judicatories to the Civil Magistrate, the Liberty of Appeal from their Sentences to the Magistrate, as likewise what our *Scotts* Parliament 1662 ascribed unto the King,

viz. the Ordering and Disposal of the external Government and Policy of the Church, and the like. If our Author had faithfully represented the Judgment of our Presbyterian Divines, he ought to have told his Reader, that they ascribe none of the above Things to the Civil Magistrate; but, in regard our Author has thought fit to wave these and the like Particulars, it may give Occasion to *some* to think that he too much favours *Erastian* Principles: However, I shall be very far from charging him with them, or take any Advantage against him from his general Expressions; only, I wish he may explain himself more particularly upon this Head, when he comes, according to his *Advertisement* subjoined to his Book, to publish his *intended Remarks* upon the different Sentiments and Conduct of Ministers relating to the Affair of *Captain Porteous*.

6thly, The Ringleaders of the Defection and Apostasy from the Lord were duly censured in the Year 1638 but such were never called to an Account by the Assembly; bly 1690, tho' their Apostasy was much greater. As for Instance, If the Bishops were censured by the Assembly 1638 for breaking the Caveats laid down by the Assembly at *Montrose*, the Bishops of the late Period were much more guilty, by their Violation and Breach of the National Covenant, and of the Solemn League and Covenant. Again, if the Bishops were censured by the Assembly 1638 for their Managements in the High Commission Court, where they pressed Novations in the Worship of God, and deprived and confined many eminent Ministers; the Bishops of the late Period were yet more wicked and guilty, when they imbrued their Hands in the Blood of the Witnesses for Christ in *Scotland*; the Tyranny of the former Bishops did never proceed unto such a prodigious Height. Yea further, if the Bishops of the former Period, together with their Adherents, were guilty of *Arminian* and *Papish* Doctrines; so, if the Bishops in the Period before the Year 1690 had been tried and judged in the same faithful Manner, according to the Example of the Assembly 1638, many of the Prelatical Clergy had been found as deep in such gross Errors.

7thly, The Order observed in the laudable Proceedings of the Assembly 1638 was inverted in the Year 1690: As for Instance, The Assembly 1638 condemned expressly the Corruptions and Defections of the former Period, and asserted the Presbyterian Government and Discipline of this Church,

Church, from the Book of Discipline, according to the Word of God and our National Confession of Faith or Covenant; and the Proceedings of this Assembly are confirmed by the Assembly 1639, and thereby the House of God in *Scotland* was reared up upon its Scripture Basis and Foundation; and, after all, the Civil Sanction is given to our Reformation by the Parliament 1640: But in the Year 1690 the Parliament first settle the Government of the Church, after their own Way and Manner, by their Act *June* 7th 1690; and the first General Assembly of this Church after the *Revolution* is convened at *Edinburgh* *October* 16th the foresaid Year, and sits down upon the foresaid Settlement: Hereby the due Order of the House of God was inverted, in regard the Settlement of the Government of the Church belongs in the first Instance unto a Judicatory of Christ met together in Name of the Lord Jesus; and that which is incumbent upon the Civil Powers, in this Case, is only to give the Civil Sanction unto the same. Likewise, when the first General Assembly met after the *Revolution*, they rest satisfied with the Parliament's Settlement of our Government, and never rear up the House of God in their Ecclesiastical Capacity upon its proper *Basis* and Foundation, *viz.* the holy Scriptures, and, in an Agreeableness thereto, upon our Book of Discipline, and the solemn Covenant-engagements of this whole Church and Land to the most high God. And here I must add, That in the Settlement of our Presbyterian Church Government by the Parliament 1690, as the *Presbytery* in their *Act* p. 38. justly observe, "All the legal Securities given to this Church, in that Covenanting Period from 1638 to 1650, are overlooked and passed by." And it must be regreted, that the above Proceedings, and this silent Submission of the Assembly 1690, who gave no Manner of Testimony against the above Omissions, was a Departure from a material Part and Branch of the Testimony of the Church of *Scotland*. The only Apology that can be made for the Proceedings of this Church at that Time, and their silent Submission under the Parliament's Settlement, is what is contained in the Judgment that the Committee of Assembly 1690 give concerning the Paper given in by Mr. *Shiells* and other Ministers, *viz.* That it contained several *unseasonable* and *impracticable Proposals*. The particular and express Condemning of our National Steps of Defection, the Renewing of our Covenants, the Asserting of the Rights and Privileges of the Spiritual Kingdom.

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of Christ, &c. were at this Time judged *unseasonable* and *impracticable Proposals*: But, what made such Proposals unseasonable and impracticable? The Case stood plainly thus, A thorow Reformation was not at Heart with the most Part; the Estates of the Kingdom at that Time were of a quite different Temper and Disposition from what they were in the Year 1638, they were not sensible of their Defection and Backsliding from the Lord; and, as Mr. *Hog* observes in his Life, “ New Presbyterians, formerly Persecutors or
 “ Compilers, grew into great Respect and Power; and
 “ some got into Church-judicatories, tho’ they neglected
 “ inferior Courts, and took no Inspection of the Congrega-
 “ tions they belonged to: Thus old Sufferers were born
 “ down, unless they went into a Sort of *Political Presby-*
 “ *tery* upon the *Revolution-Footing*.” He regrets in the same Place, that when Judicatories had the Benefit of Access unto crowned Heads, that they did not embrace that Opportunity for asserting and owning the Principles for which we had suffered for many Years.

I shall not further insist upon the Omissions at the *Revolution*, such as, the Church’s neglecting judicially to assert the perpetual Obligation of the National Covenant of *Scotland*, and of the Solemn League and Covenant of the three Nations, with other Particulars that are mentioned in the *Presbytery’s Act and Testimony*; in regard the Exceptions that are laid by the Author of the *Essay* against the *Act and Testimony*, upon these Heads, are so very frivolous, that they deserve no Manner of Notice. Tho’ I have given the above Account of the Differences betwixt the Proceedings of the Assembly 1638 and the Conduct of the Assembly 1690, yet I am far from affirming that the Assembly 1638 was in nothing defective; while General Assemblies consist of sinful and fallible Men, their Proceedings will be always imperfect and defective: But it is evident from the Instances that I have given, that the Testimony of the Church of *Scotland*, as it was stated in former Times, for our Covenanted Reformation, and against a Course of Defection from the same, was in many Instances dropt or departed from in the Year 1690; as also, that the Church of *Scotland*, in her judicative Capacity the foresaid Year, was far from being so faithful in testifying against a Course of Defection and Backsliding betwixt the Years 1660 and 1688, as the Assembly at *Glasgow* was, in testifying against the Course of Defection carried on before the Year 1638; and this made some of the old Men who had seen our first
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Temple weep, when they saw the Foundations of our second Temple laid; tho' many of the younger Sort, who had not been Witnesses to the Glory of our reforming Period, rejoiced at their Deliverance from *Popish* and *Prelatical* Tyranny. I shall close this Section with some Words of Mr. *Rutherford's*, in his Letter to the persecuted Church of *Ireland*, dated in the Year 1639, where, speaking of the Work of Reformation in that Period, he says *, “ Alas! I fear that *Scotland* be undone and slain
 “ with this great Mercy of Reformation, because there is
 “ not here that Life of Religion, answerable to the huge
 “ Greatness of the Work, that dazleth our Eyes: For the
 “ Lord is rejoicing over us in this Land, as the Bride-
 “ groom rejoiceth over the Bride; they call us now no
 “ more *Forsaken* and *Desolate*, but our Land is called
 “ *Hephzibah* and *Beulah*, Isa. lxii. 4.—The *Canaanite*
 “ is put out of our Lord's House; there is not a Beast left
 “ to do Hurt (at least professedly) in all the holy Moun-
 “ tain of the Lord. Our Lord has fallen to wrestle with
 “ his Enemies, and hath brought us out of *Egypt*; *We*
 “ *have the Strength of an Unicorn*, Num. xxiii. 22.—
 “ It is not Brick nor Clay, nor *Babel's* cursed Timber and
 “ Stones, that is in our second Temple: But our princely
 “ King, *Jesus*, is building his House all Palace-work and
 “ carved Stones; It is the Habitation of the Lord. We do
 “ welcome *Ireland* and *England* to our Welbeloved, &c.”
 This excellent Person has more to the same Purpose in that Letter. I am sensible that I have swelled this Book too much with the above historical Account I have given, yet I do not grudge any small Pains I have been at in searching into the Conduct of our reforming Fathers; and, since the Author of the *Essay* has given me Occasion to contribute my small Endeavours for vindicating and clearing the Proceedings of the Year 1638, I hope such as have any Regard for our Covenanted Reformation will not judge their Labour altogether lost in reading the Account I have given.

* *Let. Part 2. Epist. 27.*

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S E C T. II.

Wherein the injurious Reflections that are cast by the Author of the Essay upon the Assembly 1638 are considered.

I Have in the preceeding Section given some Account of the Rise and Progress of that glorious Appearance of the Lord for this Church in the Year 1638, as also of the Proceedings of that famous Assembly at *Glasgow* that same Year. This Assembly has been always treated with Contempt by the *Popish* and *Prelatical* Party; their faithful Proceedings have been a grievous Eye-sore unto them. Our *Scots* Parliament, by the second Act of their second Session *Anno* 1662, do expressly condemn the Assembly at *Glasgow*, "as an unlawful and seditious Meeting; and declare, that all their Acts, Deeds and Sentences are in all Time coming to be repute unlawful, void and null." But I never heard of any of the *Presbyterian* Denomination in *Scotland*, who have not always spoke and writ honourably, and with great Regard to this Assembly and their Proceedings, till the Author of the *Essay*, under a *Presbyterian* Character and Profession, has thought fit to vent himself in a very indecent and injurious Manner against them, while he treats several of their Proceedings as unreasonable, bad and tyrannical. However, our Author is sure that no Law now in Being, either Civil or Ecclesiastical, can reach him; and therefore he may deal the more freely with that solemn Assembly at *Glasgow*: For the above Act of Parliament was neither rescinded nor repealed at the Revolution. As it condemns the Assembly 1638, so, as Mr. *Woodrow* observes †, it casts a Slur upon our excellent Reformation from Popery; and therefore he justly affirms, "That 'tis a Shame and Reproach that it stands in the Body of our *Scots* Laws."

Before I enter upon the Reflections that he throws upon the Proceedings, as also upon the constituent Members, of the foresaid Assembly; 'tis necessary that I examine the Exceptions that are laid by our Author against the National Covenant, in regard this Covenant was renewed with great Solemnity and Devotion in the Year 1638, and also in regard the Assembly that met at *Glasgow* the said Year declared the true Sense and Meaning of the Covenant in

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some Things that were controverted, and appointed it to be subscribed according to its genuine Sense and Meaning in all Time coming, as I have narrated in the preceeding Section.

With respect to the National Covenant, our Author gives us an Account of its Rise, from *Petrie's History*, *Essay* p. 65. where he tells us, " In 1580, (*Petrie* says) Dispensations were sent from *Rome*, permitting *Papists* to promise, swear, subscribe, and to do what other Things might be required of them, if in Mind they continued firm to the *Papish* Interest" Our Author adds, " And according to him (*viz Petrie*) these Dispensations gave the first Rise to our National Covenant, in which *Papistry* is so pointedly abjured." But, according to our Author's indistinct Way of expressing himself, *some* of his Readers have imagined that *Petrie* affirms our National Covenant had its Rise from *Rome*: Therefore, to clear the Matter, I shall give the Reader the express Words as they ly in *Petrie's History* *, in regard his Words are both altered and very much curtailed by our Author. " At that Time, *says Petrie*, *viz.* 1580, were found some Dispensations sent from *Rome*, permitting *Papists* to promise, swear and subscribe, and do what other Thing might be required of them, so that in Mind they continue firm and use Diligence to advance privily the *Roman* Faith. These Dispensations were shewed unto the King: For Remedy, at first he gives Order to one of his Ministers, *John Craig*, to writ a Form of Abjuration of *Papistry*. In Obedience, *John Craig* writes a Confession, relative unto the former Confession (which was wholly positive) and abjuring all the Corruptions of *Rome*, both in Doctrine and superstitious Rites and whole Hierarchy; together with a Promise to continue in the Obedience of the Doctrine and Discipline of this Church, and to defend the same to our Vocation and Power all the Days of our Lives, under the Pains contained in the Law, and Danger both of Body and Soul: And seeing many are stirred up by *Satan*, and that *Roman*; Antichrist, to promise, swear, subscribe, and for a Time use the holy Sacraments in the Church deceitfully, against their own Conscience, &c." as follows in the National Covenant. From the above Words of *Petrie*, we may clearly see what gave Rise to the National Covenant, *viz.* Under the Covert of the above-mentioned Dis-

* Hist. p. 406,

Dispensations from *Rome*, severals of the *Popish* Party sheltered and thought themselves safe, both in signing our large *Confession of Faith*, and in joining deceitfully in the Use of the holy Sacraments; therefore the short *Confession of Faith* or *National Covenant* was framed, wherein the Abominations of *Rome*, and amongst others the above *Dispensations*, are particularly and expressly abjured; and wherein likewise the sincere Intention of the Swearer is declared in the strongest Terms. And as for the strong Expressions that are made Use of in the *National Covenant*, 'tis plain that they were designed by the Framers of it, as a Rail to debar such as they say were stirred up by *Satan* and that *Roman Antichrist*, to promise, swear, &c. and for a Time to use the holy Sacraments in the *Kirk* deceitfully; minding thereby, under the external Cloke of Religion, to corrupt and subvert secretly God's true Religion within the *Kirk*, &c. And if, after all, any should wickedly presume to break in over the Rail, the Sin should ly at their Door, and this bold Presumption should be an Aggravation of their hainous Guilt, or, as it is expressed in the *Covenant*, *their double Condemnation in the Day of the Lord Jesus*.

The above Observation, taken from *Petrie's History*, may help to take off the Force of some other Exceptions that are laid by our Author against the *National Covenant*: As for Instance, *Essay* p. 110. he tells us, "That some, sundry, yea, many among the most judicious, are of Opinion the *National Covenant* ought to be rectified, not only by Explications, but by some Alterations: And, to name but in one Particular, 'tis said, They cannot see how any else but real assured Converts or Believers can take the *National Covenant*, none but such as have what is called *sensible reflex Assurance*." 'Tis plain, that our Author is amongst the *some* or *many* who start the above Difficulty against the *National Covenant*; otherwise, when he mentions the said Difficulty, he should have been at Pains to satisfy these *most judicious* Persons who have moved it. The Objection then that our Author makes against the *National Covenant* is, That none but assured Converts or Believers, and such who have *sensible reflex Assurance*, can take the *National Covenant*. Here I might ask our Author, May not a true Believer be assured and perswaded of the Truths of the Gospel, and yet at the same Time be in the Dark about his own Interest in Christ, or want what he calls *sensible reflex Assurance*? As also, it

might be enquired, If there can be any reflex Assurance, but what is in some Degree or other *sensible*? But, not to insist upon this, I shall consider what is offered by our Author, to prove that "none but such as have what is called sensible reflex Assurance can take the National Covenant." This (*says he*) they could not do, "In regard the Takers in swearing say, After long and due Examination of our Consciences in Matters of true and false Religion, we are now thorowly resolved in the Truth by the Word and Spirit of God." But there is nothing in these Expressions which are contained in the Preamble to our National Covenant, that gives the least Ground for the Difficulty above-mentioned: The Subject of the thorow Resolution, mentioned in the above Words of the Covenant, is not one's particular *personal Interest in Christ*, but Matters of *true and false Religion*; and, may not one be fully assured, or thorowly perswaded, with respect to the Truth in Matters of true and false Religion, tho' they have not a sensible reflex Assurance concerning their own personal Interest in Christ? for it is this Assurance I suppose is meant by such who move the Difficulty. And I judge that these *sundry* or *many* judicious Persons, who have moved the above Objection against the Covenant, have not duly considered the above Words of our National Covenant on which their Difficulty is grounded, in regard the Objection that they move upon this Head, against our National Covenant, amounts to this, That none can be *thorowly resolved* in their own Consciences in Matters of *true and false Religion*, if they have not an Assurance of their personal Interest in Christ: And I suppose this will be looked upon as a dangerous as well as erroneous Conclusion, in regard it would make true Believers, while they want sensible reflex Assurance, *Scepticks* in Matters of true and false Religion. When it is added in the Preamble to the Covenant, "That they are thorowly resolved in the Truth by the Word and Spirit of God;" Neither does this infer the Necessity of what our Author calls *sensible reflex Assurance*; and that because such as are only temporary Believers may be resolved in the Truth of Matters of true and false Religion, by the Word and the common Operations of the Spirit of God. I doubt not but it may be said of those mentioned in the Parable, *Mat. xiii. 20. who heard the Word, and anon with Joy received it, and yet fell away*; that they were resolved in the Truth with respect to Mat-

ters of true and false Religion : And therefore even such who are neither Converts, nor assured Converts and Believers, may express themselves in the above Words of our National Covenant. Yea, further, such as have only what is called a mere historical Faith, may be resolved in their own Consciences in the Truth, with respect to Matters of true and false Religion, both by the Word, and the common Strivings of the Spirit of God with their own Consciences ; and therefore might take the National Covenant, and warrantably express themselves in the above Manner. 'Tis here likewise to be observed, that, after the Truth had been overclouded with Antichristian Darkeness, it did break forth with a beaming and radiant Lustre in reforming Times; there was a very plentiful Effusion of the Spirit, when the Lord brought his Church and People in this Land out of Antichristian Darkeness ; as also, there was in the Year 1638 a more than ordinary Effusion of the Spirit upon all Ranks of Persons in this Land, as I have already observed. Under this plentiful Effusion of the Spirit, many were savingly inlightned ; others had a common inlightning Work of the Spirit of God, in Matters that concerned the Difference betwixt true and false Religion ; and therefore might warrantably swear, not only in the above Terms contained in the Preamble, but might also say, "That they were perswaded
 " in their Consciences, thro' the Knowledge and Love
 " of God's *true Religion*, imprinted in their Hearts by the
 " Holy Spirit." And tho' many at this Time were savingly inlightned, yet there is no Doubt that others were only under a common inlightning Work of the Spirit, and therefore fell away ; they proved unstedfast and perfidious in his Covenant ; And this was likewise the Case with *Israel* in the Wilderness, who swore with as great Solemnity to the Lord as ever *Scotland* did, and yet with many of them *God was not well pleased*, 1 Cor. x. 5. I must further observe, with respect to the above strong Expressions contained in the Covenant, that they are agreeable to the Scripture-rule for such solemn Actions ; such as, *Jer. iv. 2.* *And thou shalt swear, The Lord liveth, in Truth, in Judgment, and in Righteousness ; and the Nations shall bless themselves in him, and in him shall they glory.* These Words of the Prophet do plainly point at the Swearing or Covenanting of Nations unto the Lord ; and the above Expressions in our National Covenant are expressly laid against these who sheltered themselves under Dispensations
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from *Rome*, and who dealt deceitfully and against their own Consciences in the Matters of God: Therefore our Covenanting Fathers declare, That they swear in Truth, or in Sincerity, being resolved in their own Consciences in the Truth, with respect to *Matters of true and false Religion*, by the Word and Spirit of God: This is said, in Opposition to the above hypocritical Deceivers. Again, they declare they swear in Righteousness and Judgment, being perswaded in their own Consciences, “through the Knowledge and Love of God’s true Religion imprinted in their Hearts by the Holy Spirit.” This is said likewise in Opposition to such as were guilty of Hypocrisy and Double-dealing with God and his *Kirk*; as also, a blind implicate Faith, or the general doubtfom Faith of the Church of *Rome*, is hereby condemned.

As for the other Expressions of our National Covenant, from which our Author likewise argues, that a *sensible reflex Assurance* is needful in such as would swear the National Covenant, viz. “To this true reformed *Kirk* we join ourselves willingly, in Doctrine, Faith, Religion, Discipline, and Use of the holy Sacraments, as lively Members of the same in Christ our Head.” The Difficulty is chiefly founded upon the last Words, *as lively Members*, &c. And, for clearing of this Difficulty, I observe, That as the Lord Jesus is given to be Head over all Things unto the Church which is his Body, so this glorious and exalted Head may be viewed under a double Consideration, and so may his Body the Church. 1st, The Church may be considered as it is his *believing and mystical Body*; 2^{dly}, As it is a *visible professing Body*. To the Church considered as his believing *mystical Body*, the Lord Jesus Christ is not only the Head of Rule and Government, but he is in a special Manner the Head of all gracious, saving and spiritual Influences, whereby they are quickned and sanctified, and preserved unto his heavenly Kingdom; their Union is from this holy One, who communicates his Spirit unto all the Members of his mystical Body, according to their different Measures. Again, if the Church is considered as a *visible professing Body*, he is both a Head of Rule and Government, and also of the Communication of all these spiritual Gifts, not only such as are saving, but also of all these common Gifts and Graces, whereby all the Members of the visible Body are, in their several Spheres and Stations, adapted and made serviceable unto the Good of the whole Body, 1 Cor. xii. 14, — 23. Further, when
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the Church is viewed as the believing mystical Body of Christ, she is then considered as under the internal Dispensation of the Grace of the Covenant. Again, when the Church is viewed as a visible professing Body, she is then considered as under the external Administration of the Covenant of Grace, making an outward credible Profession of the Truths of the Gospel, and giving an outward Subjection unto the Ordinances of Christ, particularly the Government and Discipline of his House. I observed in the first Section of the first Chapter, That tho' every particular Church stands in Relation unto the Catholick Body as a *Part* unto the *Whole*, yet every particular Church, whether National or Presbyterial, may be considered as a visible Body, in respect of its own Members, Order and Government. And it is very obvious and plain, that when our reforming Fathers declare their Conjunction with this *true reformed Kirk* in Doctrine, Faith, Religion, Discipline, &c. no more can be meant but their Conjunction with this reformed Church as an outward visible organick Body, making an outward Profession of the true Faith, and professing Subjection unto the Ordinances of Divine Institution and Appointment: And, when they declare themselves lively Members of the professing visible Body in Christ their Head, no more can be intended than the Sincerity of their Profession, in Opposition unto the dead and corrupt Members of *Antichrist* their Head, who were only moved from worldly Respects, as it is expressed in our Confession of Faith; and who under the external Cloke of Religion, by vertue of the *Pope's* Dispensations, subverted secretly God's true Religion, and, when their Time did serve them, became open Enemies and Persecutors of the same, under the vain Hope of the said Dispensations, devised (as is likewise expressed in the National Covenant) against the Word of God, to the *Pope's* greater Confusion, and the double Condemnation of all such his Followers, in the Day of the *Lord Jesus*. Hence the Reader may see, that when our Covenanters swear, as lively Members of this reformed Church in Christ their Head, it is not that vital Union betwixt Christ the Head and the mystical Body, that is here mainly intended; but it is that outward visible Conjunction, as Members of the same visible organick Body, under Christ the Head of the Church, that is here principally intended: And therefore, when they declare themselves lively Members of the said Body, no more can be meant but that their Profession was

not that dead, rotten, hypocritical and deceitful Profession, with a Design to subvert the true Religion, which severals of the *Papist* Party made. Hence they add, "We therefore, willing to take away all Suspicion of Hypocrisy, and of such Double-dealing with God and his Kirk, call the Searcher of all Hearts for Witness, that our Minds and Hearts do fully agree with this our Confession, Promise, Oath and Subscription, &c." From what is above observed, I hope the Reader may see, that there is no Ground for that Objection which our Author tells us *many* among the most judicious make against the National Covenant; as also, that the Covenant may be sworn in its genuine Sense and Meaning, even by such who have not what our Author calls sensible reflex Assurance.

Our Author makes another Objection against the National Covenant, p. 185. *viz.* "Might not some serious Souls, having a full sensible Assurance, being perswaded the Believer is beyond all Danger of Hell, had a Scruple to swear to do so and so, *under the Danger of both Body and Soul in the Day of God's fearful Judgment?* which are the Words of that Covenant. *He adds,* If I mistake not, most Part of the seven Brethren, sometime since 1722, would had a Scruple to swear in the above Terms." To which I answer, Our Author is very much mistaken; for all the seceding Brethren may safely swear the Covenant in the above Terms without any Scruple. I hope our Author will not alledge against any of them, that they have departed from the Doctrine laid down in our Confession of Faith; and they cheerfully own the sixth Article of the 19th Chapter of our Confession of Faith (as well as the other Articles of that Confession) *viz.* "Altho' true Believers be not under the Law as a Covenant of Works, to be thereby justified or condemned; yet it is of great Use to them, as well as others, — and the Threatnings of it serve to shew what even their Sins deserve, &c." Does not every Oath contain, either explicitly or implicitly, a solemn Appeal to God, not only as the Witness, but also as the Judge and *Avenger* in case of Perfidy or False-swearing? If our Author is amongst the *some* who scruple at the National Covenant on account of the above awful Certification in its Bosom, he is not far from the Principles of the *Quakers* and *German Anabaptists*, who affirm, that it is not lawful to swear any Oaths whatsoever.

I proceed now to consider what is advanced by our Author against the constituent Members of the Assembly 1638. He makes mention of a great many Oaths that were imposed before 1638; tho' I have not observed that any of them were imposed either by Civil or Ecclesiastick Authority, nay, not by the pretended Assemblies of that Period; I do not pretend to know what the lawless *High Commission* did. And, after he has reckoned up his Oaths, he tells us, *Essay* p. 92. "I suppose the Ministers of that Assembly 1638, for a great Part, were Men who had sworn and come under these Oaths." And, p. 89. he tells us, "That Assembly consisted mainly of such as had subjected themselves to Prelacy, which, *says he*, was the settled Government of the Church from 1606 to that Time; and many of them had taken the abominable Oaths which were imposed in that Period: And then they neither professed Repentance for complying with Prelacy, nor professed Repentance for taking such Oaths, nor was any Confession required of them, &c." He subjoins, "And, for ought I know, there might be Twenty in that Assembly that had complied with Prelacy, for one such received by the Church of *Scotland* at the *Revolution*." The above Charge against the Members of that famous Assembly is laid in a very invidious Manner, and with an evident Design to expose and defame them. I hope, from the Narrative that I have given in the preceding Part of this Chapter, the Reader will see that there is no Truth in what our Author advances, when he affirms, That such as had complied with Prelacy, and had taken the Oaths he mentions, did not profess Repentance for the same. The whole Proceedings of the Land at that Time, as also of the Assembly 1638, were one continued Series and Tract of a publick Confession of the Backslidings of this Church and Land from the Lord, and of a publick Profession of Repentance for the same; Therefore, upon Supposition that it was true that the most Part of that Assembly had subjected to Prelacy, it is very indecent in our Author to throw up the same: The Lord hath said that he will not remember the Sins of his People, who acknowledge their Iniquities and return unto him, and that he will cast all their Sins into the Depths of the Sea; 'tis then very much Presumption in others to upbraid them with these, much more when it is done with a Design to extenuate the Sins of others. And it is obvious, that our Author misrepresents the Assembly 1638, that he

may extenuate the Conduct of the Assembly 1690, with respect to the Prelatick Clergy, and other Steps of Defection.

But when our Author affirms so confidently, that the Assembly 1638 consisted *mainly* of such as had subjected themselves to Prelacy, and that the Ministers of that Assembly were for a great Part Men who had sworn the Oaths he mentions, I want his Vouchers to support this Charge. Tho' he abounds in his Authorities, yet he has not given us one Authority to support the Charge he has laid against such a reverend and faithful Body of Men. Does he think that we must sustain his invidious Accusations as true, upon his sole Authority? Therefore I demand of him a Proof of the Charge; and I may justly crave that the World may hold him as a Slanderer, unless by good and sufficient *Vouchers* he prove the Accusations that he has laid against an Assembly, concerning which I may say, without Disparagement unto any others, that the Church of *Scotland* has never seen a more faithful Body of Men representing her in the Capacity of a National Assembly. I do not refuse that some of the Ministers who were Members of the Assembly 1638 had complied with Prelacy, and also taken the Oaths required of Intrants into the Ministry: That great Man, Mr. *Henderson* their Moderator, was Prelarick in his Judgment at first, as I have reported already; and likewise I have observed, that he gave abundant Evidences of Repentance for his Compliance with the same. But that which I demand our Author may prove, is, that the Assembly 1638 consisted *mainly* of such as had subjected themselves to Prelacy, as he affirms p. 89. and that the Ministers of that Assembly, for a great Part, were Men who had sworn and come under the Oaths which he mentions p. 92. I am not obliged to prove a *Negative*; yet I might give as strong Evidences to the contrary, as a Proof of this Nature can admit: But I shall give one Evidence at the Time; and, if our Author shall upon any sufficient Grounds and Reasons disprove it, I may afterwards give him others. The Evidence I give, against our Author's Assertions, is, The King's *Proclamation* made at the Cross of *Edinburgh*, December 18th 1638, in the Time of the sitting of the said Assembly: In the said *Proclamation*, their Proceedings are condemned as illegal and unwarrantable, and all their Acts and Deeds are declared to be null and void, and the former Prohibition given them by the King's Commissioner

is justified, amongst other Reasons, for the following, That the " Commissioners for the Assembly, some of them were " under the Censure of this Church, some of them under the Censure of the Church of *Ireland*, some long " since banished for open and avowed Teaching against " Monarchy, others of them suspended, and some admitted to the Ministry contrary to the Form prescribed " by the Laws of this Kingdom, others of them Rebels " and at the Horn, some of them confined, and *all* of " them by Oath and Subscription bound to the Overthrow " Episcopal Government." By the Censures of this Church, and the Censures of the Church of *Ireland* in the Proclamation, are meant the Sentences of Deprivation, Suspension and the like, which were passed by the *High Commission Courts*, on account of the Nonconformity of several worthy Ministers to Prelacy: By these who were admitted to the Ministry contrary to the Laws of the Kingdom, are meant such Ministers who were ordained by Presbyteries, and who had not complied with the Oaths required of Intrants at that Time. Look now, Reader, and see what Truth there is in the Charge that is laid against the constituent Members of this Assembly by the Author of the *Essay*; they are indeed treated after a very hard Manner: The King by his Proclamation condemns them all, as such who had been one Way or other witnessing against Prelacy, and a Course of Conformity to the same; and now, in this Age, a *professed Son* of the Church of *Scotland* accuses the Bulk and Body of them as Compilers with Prelacy, and as a Sett of Men who had sworn all the abominable Oaths he mentions.

I shall proceed now to consider the Treatment our Author gives to the Acts and Proceedings of this Assembly; and particularly, to an Article passed amongst several others into an Act, on the 17th and 18th of *December*; it is the 17th Article in Order: I know not how often it is thrown up by our Author, and always in a very invidious Manner, as p. 20, 93, 94, 146, 168, 175, 181, &c. This Act is one of his common Topicks, it runs through his whole *Essay*, unto it he makes his Retreat when he is brought to any Pinch: He represents it as a *bad Act*, as such an *unreasonable Act*, that it has not a Parallel from that Time to this; as an Act of the *greatest Tyranny*, as an *unaccountable Act*, as an Act *restricting Ministerial Freedom*, &c. I shall now transcribe this Act, against which our Author brings so many and such grievous Charges; and,

in regard he always mentions scarce the one Half of it, I shall transcribe in *Italick* that Part upon which he thinks fit to set his Thumb, that the Reader may see that Part which is still left out of the *Essay*. “ *Whereas the Con-*
 “ *fession of the Faith of this Kirk, concerning both Doctrine and*
 “ *Discipline, so often called in Question by the corrupt Judg-*
 “ *ment and tyrannous Authority of the pretended Prelates, is*
 “ *now clearly explained, and by this whole Kirk represented by*
 “ *this General Assembly concluded, ordained also to be subscribed*
 “ *by all Sorts of Persons within the said Kirk and Kingdom :*
 “ The Assembly constitutes and ordains, that from hence-
 “ forth no Sort of Person, of whatsoever Quality and
 “ Degree, be permitted to speak or write against the said
 “ Confession, this Assembly or any Act of this Assembly,
 “ and that under the Pain of incurring the Censures of
 “ this Kirk.”

Is it without Design that our Author leaves out the first and the greatest Part of the above Act? Is it fair Dealing to treat such a Body of Men after this Manner, by giving scarce the one Half of their Meaning? Does not the *Ratio Legis*, or the Reason of Law, tend much to explain the same? And the Part of the above Act which is omitted by our Author, contains plainly the Reasons and Grounds of their Act, *viz.* That the Confession of Faith, or the National Covenant of this Kirk, concerning both Doctrine and Discipline, which had been called in Question by the Prelates, was now clearly explained; as also, that this was done by this whole Kirk, represented in that General Assembly; and likewise, because the said Assembly had ordained the National Covenant to be subscribed by all Sorts of Persons within this Kirk and Kingdom: These are the Grounds upon which they enact and ordain as follows in the Act. And the above Part of the Act, which our Author always cites, contains three Things; The one is, That henceforth no Person, of whatever Quality or Degree, should speak or write against the Confession of Faith or National Covenant, *viz.* as it was clearly explained by this Assembly, as is evident from the above Preamble to their Act. The second Particular enacted is, That none should speak or write against this Assembly, *viz.* against the Constitution of this Assembly, as a free and lawful Representative of the whole Church of Scotland. And a third Particular enacted is, That none speak or write against any Act of this Assembly; and all
 there

these are prohibit under the Pain of the Censures of this Kirk.

From the historical Account that I have given, it is evident, that the Particulars above-mentioned were opposed by the Prelates and their Adherents; they had protested against the Constitution of this Assembly, and declined their Authority; they condemned the Explication that was given of the National Covenant or Confession of Faith; yea, by publick Proclamations made both at *Glasgow* and *Edinburgh*, their Meetings were condemned as unlawful, after they were discharged by the King's Commissioner; likewise, all their Acts and Proceedings were declared to be null and void, and the Subjects were discharged to yield any Obedience unto them: Therefore it was necessary for the Assembly to assert their own Constitution, and to justify their own Acts and Proceedings, as also to declare all such censurable who should impugn their Constitution, or refuse Obedience unto their Acts and Proceedings. As this is all that is done in the Act about which our Author makes so much Noise, so the Assembly could do no less; for, if they had done otherwise, they had not asserted the just Rights and Privileges of Christ's Spiritual Kingdom, which was the Question now upon the Field; they had departed from the Testimony that they gave, when the Bishops protested against their Constitution, and when the King's Commissioner discharged their Meeting; and the World might justly have looked upon them as Men who had given up with that Cause, which they had espoused with the greatest Solemnity; yea, if they had done so, they had well deserved all the unfair Characters that the Author of the *Essay* gives them.

But since the Author of the *Essay*, to support his Charge against this famous Assembly, musters up a great many of their particular Acts and Proceedings, which he likewise brings as so many Accusations against them; I shall briefly consider them. The Accusations that are brought by our Author are for the most Part laid by way of *Query*, and they are introduced after his usual ambiguous Manner of dealing, *Essay* p. 93. " Now (says he) *some* might think
 " this (*viz.* the above Act) was an Act of the greatest
 " Tyranny, and a plain Restricting of Ministerial Free-
 " dom, &c." And afterwards he says, " *Some* tender
 " serious Ministers might think themselves obliged in Con-
 " science to speak, preach, and testify even against this
 " very Act itself, as restricting *Ministerial Freedom*: And
 " they

“ they might speak against that Act which condemned
 “ these Assemblies at *Aberdeen* and *St. Andrews*, partly
 “ upon such a Ground as that the *Burghs* could not be
 “ present at these Assemblies.” To which I answer, It
 would have been no great Evidence, either of Tenderneſs
 or Seriousneſs, if they had ſpoke againſt the Assembly
 1638 on this Account; and that becauſe the foreſaid
 Assemblies were condemned upon other good and
 weighty Grounds; as alſo, becauſe the Indiction of theſe
 pretended Assemblies was ſo ſhort before the Time of
 holding of them, that *Burghs* could not ſend up their
 Commiſſioners, as the Act of the Assembly at *Glaſgow* con-
 demning the ſaid pretended Assemblies bears. And tho’ I
 ſhall not enter into the Queſtion, Whether this Part of our
 Conſtitution is right or wrong? yet it is certain that *Burghs*
 have had their Commiſſioners to our Assemblies from the
 Reformation to this very Day; and therefore they may
 reckon that they have a Right to ſend their Commiſſioners,
 ay and until ſome General Assembly enquire into their
 Right, and diſcharge this Practice: And beſides, ’tis
 plain, that it was with Deſign that ſo ſhort Adverſement
 was given of the Meeting of theſe pretended Assemblies,
 that the *Burghs* might not be preſent; it ſeems they were
 not very pliable at that Time to the Court-measures for
 ſupporting Prelacy: And therefore the Assembly at *Glaſ-*
gow had good Ground to ſubjoin the above to the other
 weighty Reaſons they give for the Nullity of theſe pre-
 tended Assemblies.

Our Author adds, “ What if they (*viz.* ſerious and
 “ tender Miniſters) ſhould thought it Duty to teſtify againſt
 “ that Act *December* 5th, *Session* 15. which condemned
 “ the *unlawful Oaths of Intrants* in Time of Prelacy, be-
 “ cauſe *without any Pretext or Warrant from the Kirk*, &c.
 “ without ever mentioning their being contrary to the
 “ Word of God; ſo alſo becauſe, when they condemned
 “ the *Service-book*, the *Book of Canons* and *High Commiſſion*,
 “ they condemn them upon ſuch like Grounds, but never
 “ mention their being contrary to the Word of God?”
 I answer, That this Accuſer of the *Assembly* 1638 always
 miſrepresents or conceals their faithful Proceedings. As
 for the *Service-book*, they condemn it in their Act, *Session* 14.
 on account of its *Papiſh* Frame and Forms in Divine Wor-
 ſhip, and becauſe it contained many *Papiſh* Errors and Ce-
 remonies, and alſo was repugnant to the Doctrine, Diſci-
 pline and Order of this reformed Kirk, &c. as the Reader
 may

may see from the printed Act. As for the *Book of Canons*, the Assembly finds, "That it establisheth a tyrannical
 " Power in the Persons of the pretended Bishops, over
 " the Worship of God, Mens Consciences, &c. and that
 " it overthrows the whole Discipline and Government of
 " Synodal Assemblies, &c. Therefore they reject and
 " condemn the said Book, as contrary to the Confession
 " of our Faith, and repugnant to the established Govern-
 " ment, the Book of Discipline, &c." As for the Court
 of *High Commission*, the Assembly find that it "subverteth
 " the Jurisdiction, and ordinary Judicatories and Assem-
 " blies of the Kirk, Sessions, Presbyteries, Provincial and
 " National Assemblies;—and they condemn the said
 " Court as unlawful in itself, and prejudicial to the Liber-
 " ties of Christ's Kirk and Kingdom." As for the Oaths
 of *Intrants*, the Assembly condemn them as *unlawful*, not
 only because they were *without any Pretext or Warrant from*
the Kirk, but also because they were "contrary to the an-
 " cient and laudable Constitutions of this Kirk, which
 " never have been nor can be lawfully repealed; but must
 " stand in Force." Let the Reader now judge if there is
 any Truth in that which is reported by our Author, That
 the *Book of Canons*, &c. are condemned, because without
 any Pretext or Warrant from the Kirk, and upon *such like*
Grounds; nay, from what I have transcribed from the Acts
 of that Assembly, the Reader may easily see, that they
 were condemned upon better and surer Grounds. If our
 Author shall say, There is no Mention of their being con-
 trary to the Word of God; Are they not declared to be
 contrary to the Doctrine, Discipline and Order of this re-
 formed Kirk, to our Confession of Faith, or the ancient
 and laudable Constitutions of this Kirk? And, was not
 our Doctrine, Government and Discipline, together with
 our Confession of Faith, all received by this, as well as
 former free and lawful Assemblies, because they were
 founded and bottomed upon the Word of God? There-
 fore I conclude, that, if any Minister should alledge it to
 be his Duty to testify in the Manner mentioned by our Au-
 thor, he would be so far from shewing that he is either *se-*
rious or *tender*, that he would give sufficient Evidences of
 his being unworthy of being a Minister of the Church of
 Scotland.

His next *Query* is, "What if they should thought it
 " Duty to testify against them for that Expression in their
 " Sentence against Archbishop *Spotiswood* and others, where
 " they

“ they say, *Declining and protesting against the Assembly is by the Acts of this Assembly censurable with summary Excommunication?*” To which I answer, That, instead of *Acts of this Assembly*, our Author should have writ *Act of Assembly*; for so it is in the Act he refers to. And that which is said by the Assembly 1638 is, That, according to the Acts of Assembly in this Church, such as protest, and decline the Authority of a free, lawful, and right-constitute General Assembly, are censurable with the summat Excommunication: And, when they said so, they say nothing but what the Bible says, *Matth. xviii. 17. But, if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an Heathen Man and a Publican.*

Our Author goes on with his Queries; “ What (*says he*) if they should thought it Duty to speak against that Assembly, for showing so much Lenity to the Bishops of *Dunkeld and Caithness*, as only to suspend them from the Ministry, when it may be thought they deserved Deposition, on account of what was found evident against them?” To which it is answered, That the General Assembly, in their Sentences past against the said pretended Bishops, give their Reasons why they proceeded no further against them than they did; and our Author, if he had done Justice to that Assembly, should likewise have told them. Both the said Bishops sent Letters to the Assembly, giving their Reasons why they could not be present; one of them mentions his Sickness at the Time, the other by his Letter submitted himself to the Assembly. As none of these pretended Bishops were contumacious, so none, who read the Sentences past against them, will find Ground for alledging that any undue Lenity was exercised towards them; since the Excuses that were contained in their Letters were found relevant, it was but just and reasonable to hear them upon their Libels: And in the mean Time the Assembly suspended them from all Ministerial *Function*, and they appoint them both to be excommunicate, in case they gave not satisfying Evidences of their Repentance to such Commissioners as the Assembly had impowered to try and judge them.

Our Author's next Query is, “ What if some should said, The Sentence of that Assembly against the Minister of *Trarant* seemed somewhat sharp, in that he was suspended for baptising a Child in a private House?” To which I answer, That our Author discovers a more than ordinary Keeness against the Assembly 1638, when he charges

charges them with a Deed that was done and past near fifty Years before the said Assembly had a Being: From what Spring and Principle all this Keeness flows, I shall leave it unto his own Conscience to determine; in the mean Time he gives many Evidences that he has writ very much at Random, tho' he tells us in his Preface that a Draught of his *Essay* was prepared a Year before it was published. If our Author had read the Acts of Assembly 1638, against which he expresses himself in such an invidious Manner, he might have seen that in their Act, Session 17. when they are upon the Head of private Baptism, they give some Instances that this Church condemned the same, and, amongst others, that, in the Assembly holden at *Edinburgh* 1581, the Minister of *Tranent* was suspended for baptising an Infant in a private House. Our Author in his *Short Vindication* acknowledges his Mistake; I wish he were likewise sensible of his Mistakes in many other particular Instances, which have led him to report what is neither *Truth* nor *Matter of Fact*.

As for his next Query, "What if they should thought that Sentence somewhat severe, which enjoined such Ministers to be excommunicate, as, being deposed by that Assembly, did not acquiesce in their Sentence, or if they should exercise any Part of their Ministerial Function? which was enacted Sess. 14." To which I briefly answer, That all who were deposed by this Assembly were deposed on just and relevant Grounds, by a lawful and right-constitute Court of Christ; and therefore, if they disobeyed the Sentence of such an Assembly, they deserved to be excommunicate on account of their Contumacy, according to the Scripture above-cited.

His next Query is, "What if some should thought it a Fault to thank his Majesty for indicting or calling that Assembly, terming it a Royal Favour, when they had all Right by their intrinsic Power to meet of themselves?" To which I answer, according to our Author, p. 87. *Is it not desirable when Church and State agree? especially in a Matter of such publick Concern: And therefore, when the Supreme Magistrate, without prejudging the Power of the Church, indicts or calls a General Assembly, especially in a broken State of the Church, as was the Case at present, they have good Reason to thank him for it; and it is always more eligible to have General Assemblies with the Magistrate's Countenance, than to convene in Opposition unto him.* The above

Words of our Author, concerning the Church's having *all Right by their intrinsick Power to meet of themselves*; whether they are laid by him in a Way of Jest, or in sober Earnest, I shall not determine: But, from the above historical Account that I have given, 'tis evident, that our Reformers at that Time were fully resolved to call a General Assembly, in case the King should have refused to grant their Petitions for the same. And *Rapine*, tho' a Stranger, does more Justice unto them than our Author, tho' a *Scotsman*, and bearing the Character of a Presbyterian Minister, when he tells us in his History *, That after the *Marquis of Hamilton* returned to Court, *August 1638*, "the Tables (as *Rapine* calls them) expecting only
 " new Snares, or fresh Delays from the Court, resolved
 " that a General Assembly should be held, either with
 " the King's Permission if he would grant it, or without
 " his Consent; and that the Election of Commissioners
 " should be the 22d of *September*."

As for our Author's last Query, concerning Expressions in the Assembly's Supplications with respect to King *James VI.* which he alledges some might be apprehensive looked too like Flattery; it deserves no Manner of Notice. None that were either serious or tender could justly charge this Assembly with Flattery, who had so fully asserted the Rights of the King of Zion, and of his Spiritual Kingdom, notwithstanding of the strongest Opposition from the King and the Court. The Titles of Civil Honour and Regard that are given to Sovereign Princes are warranted from the Practice of the Church and People of God recorded in Scripture; it was no Flattery in the three Children, when they addressed King *Nebuchadnezzar*, a grand Adversary of the Church and People of God, *Dan. iii. 9.* after the very same Manner in which the *Chaldean Magicians* address him, *Dan. ii. 4.*

I have now done with the Accusations that the Author of the *Essay* has brought against that faithful Assembly at *Glasgow*, in several *What if's*. I hope the Reader will see that they come to nothing, and that, after he has filled up his Roll of invidious Accusations, he must be very sore put to it to prove them tyrannical in their Administration; for he has not the Confidence to say in any of the above Instances that *he thinks so* and *so*, but still, *What if some should think or speak so and so?* And yet, after all, he draws the following Conclusion, "Will not an Act of that
 " Nature

“ Nature (*viz.* the 17th Article above-mentioned) be “ owned by all to be a most tyrannical Act?” Are they *tyrannical*, and *most tyrannical*, in the Act our Author mentions, when yet, in all the Instances he has given to support the above Charge, he has not produced one Act of that Assembly, but what may very well be justified, yea, which he himself has not the Confidence directly or expressly to condemn, tho’ he gives sufficient Evidence that he wants not abundance of Good-will unto it? And I am sorry that I must say it of one of our Author’s Profession and Denomination, That he has given too much Ground to hold and esteem him an unjust *Accuser* and *Slanderer* of a faithful reforming Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

I shall only further add, That our Author, in his Invectives against the Act he mentions so often, tells us, p. 21. That it looks very like a restricting of *Ministerial Freedom*; this he frequently harps upon: As also, that it is more a Term of Ministerial Communion than the Act of Assembly 1733; and he reckons it a very sinful Term of Communion, p. 181, 182. To which I answer, That as all the Proceedings of that Assembly were for the Support and Advancement of our Reformation, so there is no Freedom restricted but such as may be justly reckoned a Freedom of Writing and Speaking against our Confession of Faith and our Reformation-principles: And our Author has given too many Evidences of his favouring a sinful *Latitudinarian Freedom*, in his lax Principles concerning Church-Communion that run through his *Essay*. With respect to our Author’s arguing, That it is a very sinful Term of Ministerial Communion, or at least, that, according to the Brethrens Reasonings upon the Act 1733, it may be reckoned a Term of Ministerial Communion, tho’ in our Author’s Account a very sinful one. I answer, That when I consider the faithful Actings and Proceedings of the Assembly 1638, as I look upon the Act that he quarrels to be still a binding Act, so I judge that our Author, or any others who treat the Proceedings of that Assembly in the Manner that he has done, deserve the Censures of the Church; and, if the Discipline of the Lord’s House were rightly exercised, the Spiritual Sword would be drawn against them: But it is to be regreted that Matters are otherwise stated amongst us, and that such as testify against a Course of Defection, will sooner fall under the Censures of the present Judicatories, than those who extenuate or palliate the same.

S E C T. III.

Wherein the Exceptions that are laid by the Author of the Essay, against the Acts and Proceedings of several Assemblies of our reforming Period after the Year 1638, are considered.

THE Author of the *Essay* gathers together a great Heap of Matter from the Beginning of the fourth Section of his sixth Chapter p. 79. to his 7th Chapter p. 214. that is, for about 132 Pages, it is all laid in such a confused Manner, and is never distinguished under proper Heads or Sections, that it is very difficult to trace him; the same Things are repeated frequently over and over again. I shall not concern myself in his Arguings against the Author of the Book called *Plain Reasons*, but shall only meddle with such Things as have a direct Relation unto the *Testimony* of the *seceding Brethren*. I have had Occasion, upon the former Heads, to examine a great many of the Particulars advanced by our Author, in his long Section, against the said Brethren: But in regard that our Author musters up many Acts and Proceedings of our reforming Assemblies, which he reckons Faults and Failings, or bad Acts in what he calls that *extolled Period*, year likewise, according to his ordinary Way, with an *If*, with a *Perhaps*, endeavours to impress his Readers that the Proceedings for Twelve Years Time from 1638 to 1650 were more tyrannical than any Proceedings of the Judicatories of this Church since the *Revolution*; and therefore he condemns the seceding Ministers, because they do not in their *Testimony* condemn the Faults and Failings of this Church before the Year 1650, as well as her Defections after that Time: This obliges me to consider the bad Acts that he has charged upon the Assemblies of the above-mentioned Period. And, in regard I have swelled this Book too much already, I shall only take Notice of such of them as our Author seems to lay the most Stress and Weight upon.

Our Author, p. 88. takes Notice of a Complaint, which he calls a great Clamour made against the Church of Scotland as being *Erasian*; "Because sometimes, as in 1692, when the Day was altered for the Assembly's Meeting, the Assembly submitted, and yet gave no Testimony against

“ against this Incroachment.” The Case stands thus; The General Assembly in the Year 1692 was dissolved by the King’s Commissioner: The Moderator protested against the Dissolution of that Assembly; and they immediately rose, after another Day was named by the Moderator for the Meeting of the next Assembly: But, by the King’s Proclamation from the Cross of *Edinburgh*, their Meeting was adjourned from Time to Time till *March* 1694. And if our Author will believe Mr. *Hog* in his Life, as well as many others, they report, that a considerable Body of the Ministry made an Apology to the King for the Moderator’s taking upon him to name the Day for the Meeting of another Assembly, after his Majesty by his Commissioner had dissolved them; as also, that the Diet named by the Moderator was deserted, which last cannot be refused: Therefore many did justly complain, that the Church of *Scotland* had submitted unto an *Erastian* Incroachment, and that she had thereby departed from a material Branch and Part of her Testimony; especially when the Assembly 1690 had never asserted the just Rights and Privileges of the Courts of the King of Zion. And, when the Assembly did meet 1694, they gave no Manner of Testimony against the above Dissolution; neither did they assert the just Rights and Privileges of the Kingdom of Christ, tho’ the above Incroachment upon the same was reckoned by many a particular and special Call to this necessary Duty. Our Author tells us, he frankly owns, that “ it was the
 “ Fault of the Civil Government, and a Fault in his Ma-
 “ jesty King *William*, that he by his Proclamation did
 “ alter the Time appointed for the Meeting of our Gene-
 “ ral Assembly; and that it was the King’s Fault that by
 “ his Commissioner in 1692 he raised that Assembly: And
 “ also, he thinks it was the Sin of the Church of *Scotland*,
 “ that she did not adhere to the Protest taken by Mr. *Crigh-*
 “ *ton* her Moderator at that Assembly, &c.” But, to ex-
 tenuate what he humbly thinks to be a Sin, he tells us,
 “ That the Church of *Scotland* was thus guilty in what
 “ they reckon her best Times: For, says he, tho’ the As-
 “ sembly 1638 appointed their next Meeting to be upon
 “ the third *Wednesday* of *July* 1639, and appointed such
 “ as should not acquiesce to their Acts to be cited to that
 “ Time; yet the King altered the Day, and they did not
 “ meet till the 17th of *August* that Year; and we read of
 “ no Testimony that was given by the Church of *Scotland*
 “ against what was done in that Affair.” All this is told
 by

by our Author, not only with a Design to extenuate the Sin of the Church of *Scotland*; but likewise with a Design to fix a Charge upon our reforming Period, of departing from the Testimony they had given for the Rights of Christ's Spiritual Kingdom. But, if our Author had dealt in a fair and candid Manner with the Assembly 1639, he ought likewise to have told his Reader how it came to pass that the Day appointed by the Assembly 1638 was not kept: And therefore I think it not amiss to give the Reader as short an Account of it as I can. The *Apologetical Relation* gives a short Hint at it *; but the *Latin Historian* † gives the fullest historical Account of the Transactions of the Year 1639 that I have seen, and the Reader may take from him the following short Relation of this Matter.

The several Commissioners of the General Assembly 1638 having faithfully discharged their Duty, in purging the House of God of many corrupt Ministers, in Consequence of the Powers and Instructions that were given unto them by the said Assembly; such as they had duly censured, together with the deposed and excommunicate Bishops, being filled with Rage, did run to the Court, and stirred up the King to make War against *Scotland*; And accordingly War is concluded both by Sea and Land against this Kingdom; and Preparations are made for coming down in a hostile Manner, in order, as was given out, to reduce the Rebels in *Scotland* to the King's Obedience. In the mean Time a Declaration is published by the Estates of this Nation for their own necessary Vindication, wherein they justify their bygone Proceedings, and prove that the Security of their Civil Liberties and Religion was their only Intention and Design, and Conscience their only Motive in all that they had done. But this Declaration was suppressed by the Court in *England*, that the true State of Affairs in *Scotland* might not be known there; and by the King's Orders there is a contrary Declaration emitted, stiling the Covenanters *Seditious Rebels*. This was read in all the Churches in *England*, to inflame that Nation against them.

When the Estates of *Scotland* saw that they could expect nothing but War, they resolved to prepare for their just and necessary Defence: They levy an Army of 24000 Men, who marched to the Borders under the Command of General *Leslie*; the principal Nobility and Barons of the Kingdom were in the Army, with many of the Ministry;

* *Apol. Relat.* p. 53. † *Hist. Mot.* p. 295, &c.

stry: They resolved to keep themselves upon the Defensive, and not to remove out of the *Scots* Side, and in the whole of their Behaviour to testify to the *English*, that they had no Design either of Rebellion against the King, or of War against the *English* Nation, tho' they had been loaded with such unjust Calumnies and Aspersions. This was indeed a rare and singular Army, as the *Latin* Historian reports: When they lay encamped at *Dunce-law* on the Border, there was "a wonderful Unanimity both amongst Leaders and Soldiers, with a cheerful Resolution for the Support and Defence of their common Cause ; they were frequent in the Exercise of publick and private Religion ; there was nothing of that Wickedness or Intemperance to be seen amongst them, which is frequent in military Camps: Their Hours were divided throughout the whole Army unto Prayers, Preachings, the necessary Refreshment of their Bodies, and the Exercise of their Arms." Mr. *Livingstone* in his Life reports, That, when he went up with the Army to *England* 1640, "It was very refreshful to remark, that, after they came to a Quarter at Night, there was nothing to be heard almost through the whole Army, but singing of *Psalms*, Prayer, and reading of the *Scripture*, by the Soldiers in their several Tents. He adds, And, as I was informed, there was large more the Year before, when the Army lay at *Dunce-law*." When the *English* Army beheld the Disposition and Behaviour of the *Scots* Army, they were satisfied that they had been imposed upon ; and therefore some of the *English* Nobility proposed unto the *Scots*, that they should petition the King for a Treaty, which they did accordingly: Upon which a Treaty ensued ; and, amongst other Things in the Treaty, it was agreed, that a free National Assembly should be held at *Edinburgh* upon the 6th of *August* ; and that the Parliament should meet at the same Place upon the 20th of *August*, in order to give the Civil Sanction to the Acts and Proceedings of the Assembly. Our Author is then in a Mistake when he affirms, That the King altered the Day to the 17th of *August*. If he had observed the printed Acts of Assembly 1639, he might have seen that the first printed Act, bearing Date *August* 17, was passed in the 8th Session of that Assembly. Besides, from the short historical Account I have given, the Reader may see the vast Disparity that there is betwixt what past in the Year 1692 and the 1639 : As for Instance, the Assembly 1692, when it was

met,

met, was dissolved by the King's Authority, and they did immediately rise in Obedience thereunto; but the Assembly 1639 was neither convened nor dissolved. Again, the King by his sole Authority altered the Day that was named by the Moderator of the Assembly 1692, and adjourned the Meeting of the next Assembly from Time to Time till the Year 1694; but the Diet appointed for the Assembly 1639 was altered by a Treaty concluded betwixt the King and the Flower of the Nation, with the Consent of a considerable Body of the Ministry, who were there present by the Appointment of their Presbyteries. Likewise, the Diet of the Assembly in the Year 1692 was adjourned by the King's Proclamation for about the Space of two Years; but, by the Treaty at *Dunce-law*, the Meeting of the Assembly was only adjourned for about 20 Days at most: And when it is considered that the Camp at *Dunce-law* did break up only on the 20th of *June*, where such a considerable Part of the Nation were present, it cannot be well presumed that in the present Situation of their Affairs they could be in Readiness to meet together in a National Assembly at the Time appointed in the Month of *July*. From all which it may be very evident, how unjust our Author is, in charging the Assembly 1639 with neglecting a Testimony against the 20 Days Adjournment of the Meeting of Assembly, and how little it supports his Charge against the Assembly 1639, *viz.* That they were guilty of what is justly complained of with respect to the Management of this Church in the Year 1692.

I shall now consider the Exceptions that our Author lays against our reforming Period, on account of their imposing of the Covenants under severe Penalties, as he alledges. But, before he enters upon this Head, he makes a Profession of owning, p. 109. "That it was a Praise
 " and Glory to our Land, to be a People solemnly de-
 " voted to the Lord, sworn to be for him, and to live to
 " his Praise. *He likewise owns*, this Land hath been hai-
 " noufully guilty many Ways, both in former and later
 " Times, in breaking our National Engagements: This,
 " *says he*, is just Ground of Lamentation." But then our Author is very sparing in his condescending upon particular Instances. He indeed tells us, Some have violated our Covenants by turning to *Popery*, and others by Disloyalty to our rightful Sovereigns; these are his Particulars: But then, when he tells us, that some have violate them by
 turning

turning to other dreadful Errors, and by sinful complying with and declaring for *Prelacy*, and some by Schism and sinful Division; his Reader is left to make his Conjectures what these dreadful Errors or sinful Divisions are, and what these Compliances or Declarations for *Prelacy* were, or who were the Compliers with or Declarers for *Prelacy*. Our Author likewise, p. 112. would have his Reader believe that he is not speaking against the Covenants themselves, but against the Manner of imposing them. As to the Manner of imposing them, he tells us, p. 111. "That, if the Covenants were to be renewed, it would be a Sin to injoin them under any such severe Penalties as Church and State enforced them with from 1638 to 1649. And, *says he*, If we are to give a full, free, faithful Testimony against the Sins of our Forefathers, as well as against the Sins of our own Day, instancing their Iniquities as Causes of Fasting, then I think we ought to acknowledge the Sin of Church and State in that Period, in imposing these solemn Covenants under such severe Penalties, which were a strong Temptation to the dreadful Sin of Perjury."

With respect to the Proceedings of the *State*, I shall not take upon me to justify every strong Expression that is used by them in their *Acts* injoining the *Covenant*; but neither dare I condemn them, in regard I do not very well know the particular Situation of the Nation in our Covenantee Period: Only, it seems to be very plain, that the Covenants were refused by none but the *Popish* and *Prelatical* Party, who were all at that Time zealous Asserters of the Sovereign's arbitrary Power and Authority. Likewise, our Author cannot give me an Instance of any that suffered either Confiscation of Goods, Banishment or Death, on account of their refusing the Covenants; tho' some suffered capital Punishment on account of their Insurrection and Rebellion against the Civil Government of the Nation, in Defence of arbitrary Power, and against the just Rights and Liberties of the Subject.

With respect to the Conduct of the Judicatories of the Church in that Period, they give frequent Evidences of their Caution and Circumspection about admitting Persons to swear or sign the Covenant. As for Instance, The General Assembly 1649, in their Act Sess. 19. concerning the receiving of Engagers in the late unlawful War against England, to publick Satisfaction, observe, That many have heretofore made a Shew and Profession of their Repentance,

who were not convinced of their Guiltiness, nor humbled for the same, &c. Therefore, for the better determining the Truth of the Sincerity of the Repentance of those who desire to be admitted to the Covenant and Communion, they appoint and ordain, "That none of these Persons
 " who are *debarred* from the Covenant and Communion
 " shall be admitted and received thereunto, but such as,
 " after exact Trial, shall be found, for some competent
 " Time before or after the Offer of their Repentance,—
 " to have in their ordinary Conversation given real Testi-
 " mony of their Dislike of the late unlawful Engagement,
 " and of the Courses and Ways of Malignants, and of their
 " Sorrow for their Accession to the same ; and to live so-
 " berly, righteously and godly, &c." And, after they
 enumerate several Sorts who have made Defection and
 Backsliding from the Covenant, they ordain, "That these,
 " notwithstanding their Profession of Repentance, be not
 " suddenly received ; but a competent Time, according
 " to the Discretion of the Judicatory, be assigned to them
 " for the Trial of the Evidence of their Repentance, ac-
 " cording to the Qualifications above-mentioned." Several
 other Evidences might be given, that the Judicatories
 at that Time were very cautious and tender in admitting
 into the Covenant such as they had Ground to suspect
 were dealing deceitfully in the Matters of God ; and I de-
 fy our Author or any others to prove that the least Seve-
 rities were exercised upon any such who scrupled at the
 Covenants upon any real Tendernefs of Conscience, yea, I
 doubt if there were any such in *Scotland* at that Time.

With respect to the Proceedings of the Church, our
 Author thinks fit to charge the Judicatories, particularly
 the Assembly 1639, as being accessary to what he calls
 great and severe Penalties ; in regard they supplicate the
 Council and Parliament to injoin the National Covenant
 to be taken by all his Majesty's Subjects of what *Rank*
and Quality soever, under all Civil Pains : Which Petition
 and Supplication was granted by the Parliament, and they
 ordained and enacted accordingly. Our Author, p. 3.
 alledges, That under all *Civil Pains* might be included
 Confiscation of Goods, Imprisonment, Banishment, for-
 feiting of Life and Fortune. To which I answer, Tho'
 I do not pretend to have Skill in the Law, yet I have
 heard it affirmed by such as are well acquaint with our
Scots Laws, That unless the Law *expresly* declares *Death*
 to be the Punishment, or mentions the Pains of Treason,
 any

any other Penalty, even the highest annexed to any Parliamentary Statute, cannot be constructed in Law to amount to Death; and that, when the Punishment is *all Civil Pains*, the Judge is at Liberty to proportion the Punishment to the Nature of the Crime, and the Quality of the Offender: And therefore, when the Covenant was enjoined under all Civil Pains, it appears to me that no more was intended than that the Refusers of the Covenant should not be admitted unto Places of publick Trust; and this I humbly judge may be very well vindicated. And besides, when I have looked into the Act of Parliament 1640, ratifying the Covenant, &c. after the Clause of *all Civil Pains*, it is subjoin'd, "And also (*viz.* the Parliament) ordains "the saven (*viz.* the Covenant) to be presented at the "Entry of every Parliament, and, before they proceed "to any other Act, that the same be publickly read and "sworn by the whole Members of Parliament claiming "Voice therein; otherwise the Refusers to subscribe and "swear the same shall have no Place nor Voice in Parliament." Here the Reader may observe, that no higher Penalty is decerned against such Refusers, than excluding them from Voice in Parliament. In like Manner, they ordain "all Judges, Magistrates, or other Officers of "whatsoever Place, Rank or Quality, and Ministers at "their Entry, to swear and subscribe the same Covenant." Here the Parliament do clearly explain themselves with respect unto the Penalty so much quarrell'd by our Author: But if our Author shall make it evident unto me, that the Civil Punishment for a simple refusing of the Covenant was carried any higher than as I have mentioned, I shall yield unto him that the Parliament 1640 were wrong, neither shall I justify the Supplication of the Assembly 1639.

Our Author appears to me very dubious and dark in his Reasonings concerning Civil Penalties annexed unto Church-decisions or religious Oaths, as also concerning Church-censures inflicted upon the Refusal of religious Oaths. I have not Room to pursue our Author at this Time in his several Reasonings upon these Heads; and therefore I shall only propose a few Questions to him, an Answer to which is very needful for clearing the Questions upon the Field: And I shall not tell him what *some* others say upon them, but give mine own Judgment plainly upon them; and I hope our Author will deal in the same Freedom and Plainness with me.

1st, Whether or not a Law, whether Civil or Ecclesiastical,

fistical, requiring a positive Duty, with a Civil Punishment or Ecclesiastical Censure annexed, infers Force upon the Consciences of Men? The Reason why I put this Question to our Author is, because, p. 111. he tells us, That the Imposing these solemn Covenants, under the severe Penalties he mentions, was a strong Temptation to the dreadful Sin of Perjury. Also, p. 113. he tells us, That we have sundry Instances in Scripture, where *Force* was used in taking solemn Covenants; as 2 *Chron.* xv. 12, 13. 2 *Chron.* xxxiv. 31, 32. *Ezra* x. 3, 8. *Neh.* xiii. 25. It is an Article of our Confession of Faith, Chap. 22. Art. 2. "That a lawful Oath being imposed by lawful Authority, in Matters of Weight and Moment, ought to be taken." I hope our Author will not refuse, that Swearing unto the Lord in religious Matters is a positive Duty enjoined under the New Testament, as well as under the Old; and that it is Duty to swear a religious Oath, when required by lawful Civil or Ecclesiastical Authority: But, if there is not a Penalty annexed unto the Law, it cannot be said to be imposed by Authority; a Law without a Sanction, is only a mere Recommendation, which may be obeyed or disobeyed as the Subject pleases. All the Divine Laws have the most awful Certification annexed unto them; yet I hope it will not be therefore said, that Men are *forced* to Obedience. Hence, when our Author, from the Scripture-instances he gives, tells us that *Force* was used in taking these solemn Covenants, he reflects upon the Laws and Authority of the great Lawgiver. As also, when he says, The Imposing of our solemn Covenants under the Penalties he mentions, was a strong Temptation to the dreadful Sin of Perjury; it is an injurious and unsound Reflection, in regard the Corruption and Wickedness of Mens Hearts may strongly tempt them to this dreadful Sin: But a righteous Law, whatever the Penalty is, when it requires a Duty expressly commanded by the great and supreme Lawgiver, cannot in a safe Sense be said to be a strong Temptation to the above dreadful Sin. Our Author indeed adds, p. 111. "I am far from thinking the Imposing of a lawful Oath under a severe Penalty, will make it sinful to take that Oath; but it may be, yea, in my Opinion, it certainly is, a Sin in the Imposers to injoin such a solemn religious Oath under a severe Penalty; especially if in that Oath we are obliged to swear, that, in taking it, *we are not moved with any worldly Respect*, which are the very Words

of

“ of the *National Covenant*.” As for the injoining a solemn religious Oath under a severe Penalty, which, our Author tells us, is certainly a Sin in the Imposers; I must observe, that every Oath is an Act of solemn religious Worship. By a religious Oath, I suppose, our Author means, an Oath, the Subject-matter whereof is religious Things only: But he should have considered, that our National Covenant contains also a Civil Allegiance to the King; and no doubt this is likewise a religious Duty, to which we are bound by the fifth Commandment. When our Author reckons that it was a Sin to impose the Covenant under a severe Penalty, I have already observed that the Penalty annexed by the Parliament may be very well vindicated. I wish our Author would give us his Judgment, whether or no an Act injoining such a solemn religious Oath as the National Covenant, may have *any* Civil Penalty annexed unto it? If our Author shall affirm, that the Civil Sanction ought not to be given unto any religious Oaths injoined by the Church; he may for the very same Reasons affirm, that the Civil Sanction ought not to be given unto any Confession of Faith received and adopted by a Church; or, that it ought not to be given unto any Ecclesiastick Statute or Ordinance. I also wish our Author may tell us, Whether or not the Scriptures he mentions do warrant any such Penalty? Our Presbyterian Divines have hitherto pled them for Penalties of this Kind: He may see amongst others Mr. *Gillespie* in his *Miscellanies*, p. 204. Our Author upon the foresaid Scriptures observes, p. 113. That “these Oaths or Covenants
 “ were wholly and altogether Divine, not only as to their
 “ Matter, but also as to the Form, Words, and every
 “ Expression: So that People could not be under the
 “ least Hesitation, Doubt or Scruple as to the Lawfulness
 “ of all contained in them.” I want that our Author may explain himself, when he speaks of the *Form, Words, and every Expression* of a Covenant, as necessary in order to make a Covenant *wholly* and *altogether* Divine. If our Author means, that the express Words as they were writ by the inspired Penman are necessary, then we cannot have a Covenant wholly and altogether Divine, unless it is among such as do very well understand the *Hebrew* and *Greek* Languages: But as the holy Scriptures, when they are translated into many and different Languages, may very well be called the Word of God, in so far as the several Translations give us the just and true Meaning of the original

ginal Text ; so whatever is deduced by good and necessary Consequence from the holy Scripture, may and ought to be received with a Divine Faith, and without the least Hesitation, as well as that which is contained in express Scripture-words. If our Author does not grant this, he pleads the Cause of such as refuse the Warrantableness of Confessions of Faith ; and the Reader may see that his Argument, as he has laid it against our National Covenant, points plainly this Way.

2dly, I ask our Author, May not the Church, not only advise the Magistrate, but also directly apply him for the Civil Sanction to such Acts and Constitutions of her Judicatories as are founded upon the Word of God ? And, is it not the Duty of the Civil Magistrate in this Case, as he is Guardian of both Tables of the Law, to give the Civil Sanction to such Ecclesiastical Acts and Constitutions ? This is all that was done by the General Assembly 1639 in their above-mentioned Act. And, if our Author is in any Doubt about this, he may consult our Presbyterian Divines, such as Mr. *Rutherford* and Mr. *Gillespie* upon this Head.

3dly, I ask our Author, Whether or not a particular visible Church, who have embraced one Confession of Faith, one Form of Church-government, one Directory for Worship, may require it of all her Members, in order to full Communion in all sealing Ordinances, that they confess, acknowledge, and swear to abide in the Profession and Obedience of the same Doctrine, Worship, Government and Discipline ? Is not this a publick Confessing and Avouching of the Lord and his Truths ? Is not this necessary to the Unity of the particular Organick Body ? Is it not warranted from the Word of the Lord ? as *Jer. iv. 2. Micah iv. 2. Zech. ii. 3.* Is it not a very proper Mean to excite all the Members of a Church to search into the Scriptures, that they may know and be established in the Principles which they profess ? Is it not a very useful and necessary Mean to preserve a Church from Corruption and Degeneracy from such Steps of Reformation as she has already attained unto ? Our Author inveighs against our reforming Period for making the Covenants a Term of Christian Communion ; particularly, against the Act of Assembly 1648, requiring, that all Persons whatsoever take the Covenant at their first receiving the Lord's Supper. Our Author has indeed given abundant Evidence of his Laxness with respect to Terms of Communion, as

I have already observed ; I pray the Lord may preserve his People in *Scotland* from his lax Principles. Our Author brings no Argument against the Act of Assembly 1648, but only in a confident Manner tells us, That “ the King of Zion never design’d to make it a Term of Communion, so as no serious Soul, who might scruple to take that solemn Oath because of some Expressions in it, should not be admitted to his Table.” I shall not insist upon the invidious Comparison that he makes, p. 168. betwixt the Act of Assembly 1642, and the *sacramental Test*; the Absurdity of it may be obvious to any. Upon this Head of Christian Communion, I ask our Author, Can he refuse, that the Duties we are bound to in the Covenants are such as we are bound unto antecedently unto the said Oath ? Yea, we were bound unto every one of them materially when we were baptised. In all the Exceptions that he has laid against our *National Covenant*, he has not pointed at any Duty we are thereby engaged unto, to which we are not bound tho’ there had been no such Covenant. I again ask our Author, What if some serious Souls should scruple at one or mo Articles of our Confession of Faith : Will he therefore lay aside the Confession of Faith when he baptises Children ? Or, can any Confession of Faith be framed, but, according to our Author’s Way of Reasoning, some serious Souls may be found who who may scruple at some Expressions in them ? At this Rate all Confessions of Faith must be banished out of the Churches of Christ : This is indeed very agreeable unto the lax Principles he has vented, but opposite to all the Principles of the reformed Churches.

He reflects upon the Act of Assembly 1639, Sess. 23. ordaining particularly, Masters of Universities, Schools, and all Scholars at the passing of their Degrees, to subscribe the Covenant : But, does it not well become an Assembly to be careful that such as have the Trust of teaching Youth be sound in their Principles ? And as for the Matter of passing of Degrees, why might not the Assembly require of such, who were graduate in the Universities, an Evidence of their Soundness in the Faith ? This was not a new Thing in this Church ; it was ordained by the Assembly 1581, and always practised in the *Universities* ev’n from the foresaid Year to the 1638, as the *Latin Historian* reports, p. 59, 63. As for that Act of Assembly 1640, Sess. 10. declaring, That any Expectant who refused the Covenant should not have Liberty of residing

siding in a Burgh. As this Act is confined to *Expectants*, so that Assembly had no doubt some particular Grounds and Reasons for a Declaration of this Nature; and, since I do not know their Reasons, I shall not take it upon me either to justify or condemn their Declaration: But, as it is laid in their Act, it appears to be a Civil Penalty; and the most that can be said against it is, That it was a Mistake in the Administration. And as for that Act of the Assembly 1648, Sess. 31. ordaining all young Students to take the Covenants. After the heavy Charges that our Author has brought against it, What is it that the Assembly ordain? It is even this, That such as enter into the Colleges, who are supposed to have come to the Years of Discretion, should renew their baptismal Engagements to the Lord, or declare expressly their Adherence to the same.

With respect to the *Solemn League and Covenant*, there are two Exceptions laid against it by our Author; the one is, p. 84. That all Sort of Prelacy was not abjured by the second Article of that Covenant, particularly the Scheme proposed by Archbishop *Usher*. He ought to have told his Reader what this Scheme was; but, not to insist upon this, I shall only observe, That, in the first Article of the *Solemn League*, they expressly swear “to the Preservation of the reformed Religion in the Church of *Scotland*, in “ Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government.” I hope it will not be alledged that any Sort of Prelacy obtained in the Government of the Church of *Scotland* at that Time: Our Presbyterian Church-government was then in its Vigour and Purity, and our Government is owned in this Covenant as a Branch of the reformed Religion in *Scotland*, and the Swearers of the *Solemn League and Covenant* bind themselves to the Preservation of this reformed Government and Discipline; but this they could never have done, in a Consistency with their acknowledging any Sort of *Episcopacy*. When the Author, from the Historian he refers to, mentions some great Men in the *Westminster* Assembly, who would not abjure all Sort of *Episcopacy*; both he, and such Historians, leave a Blot upon the Memory of these great Men; 'tis upon the Matter a Charging them with dealing deceitfully in such a solemn Transaction. Likewise, p. 185. he lays another Exception against some Words in the third Article of the *Solemn League*; “ Might “ not (says he) some Persons of weaker Capacity, having “ the Truth of Grace, scruple to swear, that *with their* E.

" *Eſtates and Lives they ſhould defend the Rights and Privileges of Parliament?*" To which I answer, That ſome Perſons of weak Capacity, who may have the Truth of Grace, will ſometimes ſcruple at theſe Things that are moſt obvious and plain; and in this Caſe they ſhould be informed and inſtructed. But further, as the Caſe was ſtated in our covenanting Period, an arbitrary Power was claimed by the Sovereign, it was likewise in many Inſtances exerciſed; particularly, when Taxes were impoſed without Conſent of Parliament as in *England*, and when the Parliament was prorogued or diſſolved at Pleaſure as in *Scotland* 1639, 1640, the Eſtates of the Kingdom did at that Time proteſt againſt their Prorogation as contrary to their juſt Rights and Privileges: And I doubt not but the Subjects of the weakeſt Capacity might have ſo much Knowledge in the Queſtion as it was ſtated at that Time, that they could with Judgment and Knowledge ſwear the above Article of the Covenant. And, upon this Head, I may aſk at our Author, Is there not as much if not more Difficulty in ſome Expreſſions in the Oath of Abjuration, even as it is calculate for the Miniſters of *Scotland*? As for Inſtance, when they are obliged to ſwear, *That they ſhall defend his Maſteſty's Perſon and Government againſt all traitorous Conſpiracies and Attempts whatſoever*, as alſo to diſcloſe the ſame; Might not ſome reckon it a Difficulty to ſwear in ſuch Terms, in regard they cannot define or determine what the Law may reckon a traitorous Conſpiracy or Attempt? Again, Might it not be a Scruple with others to ſwear his Maſteſty's Right and Title to *all his other Dominions belonging unto Great Britain*; in regard they do not know what *all* theſe Dominions are, and it is like do not know what his Maſteſty's Right and Title is unto them? But I doubt not but our Author will reckon ſuch who move theſe Difficulties to have but a weak Capacity, when they cannot underſtand ſuch comprehensive Expreſſions.

I have now done with the Exceptions that our Author lays againſt our Covenants, and the Proceedings of our reforming Period with reference unto them. I ſhall now briefly conſider his Exceptions againſt ſome other Acts of the ſaid Period, which he brings as Inſtances of the *Faults, Failings*, bad and *tyrannical* Acts of our covenanting Period. The firſt that I mention is the Account that our Author gives us of a Clause in the Aſſembly's Directory, *Auguſt* 24. 1647. for ſecret and private Worſhip, and mutual Edifica on, &c. Our Author mentions only the *ſeventh*

Direction; but, in order to understand it, 'tis necessary that I first transcribe their sixth, *viz.* "At Family-
 "ship, a special Care is to be had, that each Family keep
 "by themselves: Neither requiring, inviting, nor admit-
 "ting Persons from diverse Families; unless it be those
 "who are lodged with them, or at Meal, or otherwise
 "with them upon some lawful Occasion." Then follows
 the *seventh* Article mentioned by our Author, *viz.* "What-
 "soever hath been the Effects and Fruits of Meetings of
 "Persons of diverse Families, in the Times of Corruption
 "or Trouble (in which Cases many Things are commend-
 "able, which otherwise are not tolerable) yet, when God
 "hath blessed us with Peace and Purity of the Gospel,
 "such Meetings of Persons of diverse Families (except in
 "Cases mentioned in these Directions) are to be disap-
 "proved, as tending to the Hindrance of the religious
 "Exercise of each Family by itself, to the Prejudice of
 "the publick Ministry, &c." Our Author gives it as his
 Opinion, that in the above Direction that Assembly de-
 clared against Fellowship-meetings *for Prayer and Christian*
Conference. I know not by what Spirit our Author is led
 in his Manner of writing; there cannot be a more unjust
 Charge laid against an Assembly than this that is laid against
 the excellent Directions that this Assembly give for private
 and secret Worship. Any who is not blind may see from
 the above Articles, that the Direction here given by the
 Assembly is, That each Family by itself should keep up
 the Worship of God; and that which is condemned is,
 the Meeting of Persons of diverse Families together, to
 the *Hindrance* of the religious Exercise of *each Family by*
itself; and this is what they had good Reason to condemn,
 as having a Tendency to all the bad Effects that they men-
 tion. Our Author tells us from *Guthrie* in his Memoirs,
 That the above Act or Conclusion was unanimously gone
 into by several eminent Ministers, some of whom he men-
 tions, who met to confer about that Affair in Mr. *Hender-*
son's Chamber 1639: That is, An Act of the Assembly
 1647 was concluded by several Ministers in 1639, even
 seven Years before it was enacted. Our Author tells us
 this Story from *Guthrie's* Memoirs. Several of his Readers,
 and these none of the weakest, have thereby been imposed
 upon, and thought that our Author told them this Story
 from one of these eminent Ministers, Mr. *James* or Mr.
William Guthrie: But, to undeceive them, I must inform
 them, that this *Guthrie* was one Mr. *Henry Guthrie*, who
 made

made a considerable Profession of Zeal for our Reformation before the Year 1662; but at that Time he complied with Prelacy, and received the Bishoprick of *Dunkeld* as his Reward in the Year 1665. I have sometimes made use of his Memoirs for clearing or confirming some historical Facts; but in this Place * the Bishop tells us a very inconsistent Story, *viz.* Some (*says he*) came from *England*, who were supposed to favour the *Brownistical* Way; and others likewise came from *Ireland*, who had betaken themselves to Conventicles, having forsaken the publick Assemblies of the Church in *Ireland*: And he tells us, that they set up those Conventicles which they called private Meetings in *Scotland*; and that they were countenanced by Mr. *David Dickson*, Mr. *Samuel Rutherford* and others: But that the soundest of the Ministers, Mr. *Ramsay*, Mr. *Alexander Henderson* and others (the Bishop thinks fit to name himself among them) were deeply affected with the said Conventicles, doubting that the Course might lead to *Brownism*; and therefore they purposed to have an Act of Assembly in the Year 1639 against the same; but Mr. *Dickson* and Mr. *Rutherford* opposed the Motion, and, instead thereof, moved for a Conference, that Brethren might unite upon the Question; and that hereupon a Conference was held in Mr. *Henderson's* Chamber, wherein the above-mentioned Conclusion was taken. He likewise reports, that the Keepers of the said Conventicles or private Meetings having become more numerous and bold, the General Assembly at *Aberdeen* in the Year 1640 took the Matter into Consideration; and that Mr. *Dickson* and Mr. *Rutherford* pleaded vehemently for the said Conventicles, till Mr. *Guthrie* (that is, the Bishop himself) took the Paper out of his Pocket, which had been signed by Mr. *Henderson* and Mr. *Dickson* in all their Names: And then, says the Bishop, Mr. *Dickson* was silent; whereupon the Act past unanimously against private Meetings.

But every Body may see that the above Account given by the Bishop is both false and inconsistent; there was no such Act as he reports past at the Assembly at *Aberdeen* 1640. No Body that know the Characters of Masters *Rutherford* and *Dickson* will believe that they favoured the *Brownistical* Way, or that they would oppose in an Assembly a Conclusion signed with their own Hands: It is plain that the perfidious Prelate has laid the whole Story with a Design to defame these excellent and worthy Men; and it

* *Memoirs*, p. 67.

is likewise plain that there was no such Meeting in Mr. *Henderson's* Chamber, concluding an Article of our Directory, which had not a Being till 1647, that is, seven Years thereafter: Therefore, if our Author had not a Design to impose upon the World when he cites *Guthrie's* Memoirs, he has quoted him without any Manner of Judgment or Consideration.

Our Author tells us, He is far from condemning private Meetings for Prayer and Conference; he owns, that Fellowship-meetings, if rightly managed, are profitable: But in the mean Time he insists only upon the Abuse of them; he never tells us wherein they are profitable. He gives us a Quotation from Mr. *Durham* on Scandal, Part 3. Chap. 15. and we have only the one Half of what Mr. *Durham* says upon Fellowship-meetings, namely, what he says upon the Abuse of them; but what is said by that great Man upon the Usefulness of such Meetings, is entirely dropt by our Author: I shall leave it to the Reader to look into Mr. *Durham* himself. I shall only add, It is an unfair, and a very cunning Way of dealing, to commend the Practice of any Thing as profitable and useful, and yet to insist only upon the Abuses of the Practice, without giving any Instances of the Profitableness or Usefulness thereof.

The Author of the *Essay*, p. 33. observes, That the Brethren in their *Judicial Act and Testimony*, p. 14. say, "That, from 1641, the Building of the House of God went on prosperously and successfully till 1650." And then he adds, "But if the Robbing of the Christian People thus of their Right to elect their Pastors, and the many other bad Acts made in that Period, was a Building of the House of God, I'm far mistaken." He gives us an Instance of one of these bad Acts, viz. "The Assembly 1642 (*says he*) ordains, not the Congregation, but the Eldership shall have the filling up of Vacancies in the Session." As also, p. 146. he affirms, that the said Act 1642 was a "Robbing the People of all Right to elect their Elders and Deacons." Here our Author charges the Assembly 1642 with a sacrilegious Robbery; but, to vindicate them from this Charge, I shall transcribe our Author's Judgment upon that Act of Assembly, in his *Full Vindication of the Peoples Right*, p. 53. When his Antagonist throws up the above Act of Assembly unto him, he replies, "I suppose all the Assembly meant by that Act was only this, that the Session should have the first

"No-

“ Nomination of such Elders and Deacons as should be
 “ taken into the Session, leaving still a Liberty to the
 “ Congregation to add or alter as they saw meet; and if
 “ so, tho’ that Act may differ from what the *Apostles*
 “ did, it will not be in direct Contradiction to it.” Our
 Author’s above Vindication is indeed clogged with an *If*,
 after his ordinary dubious Manner of expressing himself.
 Tho’, for the above Reason given by our Author, I shall
 not absolutely condemn the Act of the Assembly 1642
 in the Manner he thinks fit to do in his *Essay*, as if it
 were a *robbing the People of all Right to chuse their El-*
ders and Deacons, yet neither will I justify it in the Terms
 in which it is laid, as if it were agreeable to Apostolical
 Pattern: But, after all, the Presbytery assert what is true,
 when they affirm, That the Building of the House of
 God went on prosperously and successfully during that Pe-
 riod; and, after the particular Instances they mention,
 they declare, p. 18. That they do not intend to affirm,
 “ That under the above-mentioned Period there was no-
 “ thing defective or wanting as to the Beauty and Order
 “ of the House of God, or that there was nothing cul-
 “ pable in the Administration.” I shall only add upon
 this Head, That the Act of the Assembly 1642 has been
 always observed in Practice since that Time, and, for any
 Thing I know, long before it. And if I may here speak
 in our Author’s ordinary Dialect, or as he does in his *Short*
Vindication, p. 4. ’Tis commonly reported, that a certain
 Minister, who expresses himself with a great Zeal against
 robbing the Christian People of their Right to chuse
 their own Office-bearers, observed the Act of Assembly
 1642 in his last Election of Elders; I suppose our Au-
 thor understands me, *Quis tulerit Gracchos, &c.*

Our Author, p. 33, &c. reflects upon that Act of As-
 sembly 1642, whereby a Leit of six Persons was given to
 the King and other Patrons, that they might present one
 of the said Leit to the vacant Congregation; as also a-
 gainst the Act 1643, whereby the Assembly petition the
 King that the Leit may be restricted to three. Our Au-
 thor grants, that, according to these several Acts, the
 Leit was to be made up with the *Consent of the most or best*
Part of the Congregation: Yet he subjoins, That the above
 Acts were “ a plain robbing the People of their Right
 “ of Election; For (*says he*) in that Case they might ne-
 “ ver get the Person they most inclined for, and who
 “ would have been their Choice had they been left to
 “ their

“ their Liberty in the Election. *He adds, That, by the*
 “ Act 1642, the Congregation had not so much as the
 “ Nomination of one of the six who were to be upon that
 “ Leit; for the Presbytery had the Naming of them all.”
 The Church of *Scotland* was indeed at this Time under the
 Yoke of Patronage, under which she had ever groined
 since our Reformation from *Popery*; but yet our Author is
 very unjust unto that Assembly, when he affirms, that the
 Act 1642 was a plain robbing the People of their Right
 of Election. In their Act they were so far from being
 Robbers of the People upon this Head, that they plain-
 ly shew, that they did as much as they could, in their
 present Situation, for asserting and maintaining the Peoples
 Rights in the chusing of their own Ministers. Our Au-
 thor in his *Full Vindication*, p. 184. speaking of the fore-
 said Act, expresses himself in the following Manner; “ I
 “ dare say, was the Church of *Scotland* at her next As-
 “ sembly to enact, that no Judicatory should go into any
 “ Presentation, so as to settle a Minister upon it without
 “ the Consent of the best or most Part of the Congrega-
 “ tion; none but the Favourers of Patronages should
 “ complain.” After our Author’s above Declaration,
 ’tis very plain that he treats the Assembly 1642 in a very
 indecent Manner, when he tells us that their Act was a
 robbing the People of their Right, &c. And, if the
 Reader wants to be further satisfied anent the Regard
 that all the Judicatories had in this Period to the Rights
 of the People in calling their own Ministers, I refer them
 to our Author’s *Full Vindication*, particularly p. 181, 182,
 &c. and to his Performance intituled the *Search*, p. 103,
 104, &c. Upon this Head I cannot but take Notice of
 what is affirm’d by our Author, p. 32. viz. That the Church
 of *Scotland* has done more of late to have Patronages abo-
 lished, “ than was done from 1638 to 1649, or I think
 “ in any other Time since the Reformation.” But, what-
 ever she has done of late, she has not done so much, ac-
 cording to our Author’s own Acknowledgment in his
 above Words, as the Assembly 1642 did for the Rights
 and Interests of the Christian People in the calling of their
 Ministers. The Reverend Author of *Modern Erastinnism*
unvail’d justly observes, p. 125. upon the Act 1642, That,
 “ in the making up of the List with the Consent of the
 “ Congregation,—the Church maintained and retained
 “ their Right to elect their Ministers, tho’ by the Patron’s
 “ Title they were miserably involved in the Exercise of
 “ that

“ that Right.” This was more than has been done by the present Judicatories since the Patronage-act was past. The same worthy Author has many other judicious Observes upon the foresaid Act. But, what have our present Judicatories done of late Years with respect to the Patronage-act? They have indeed declared it to be a Grievance, they have petitioned the Parliament for the Redress of the same; and this is what the *Subject* may do with respect to any Law that they apprehend to be gravaminous unto them: But, have ever the present Judicatories judicially asserted the Principles of this Church with respect to Patronage? No, they have not; yet I find the Church of *Scotland* since the Reformation has done so, particularly when in her *Second Book of Discipline*, which was received and approven in the Year 1581 by the General Assembly, they did in the Face of a standing Law declare, That the “ Order which God’s Word craves cannot “ stand with Patronages and Presentations to Benefices “ used in the Pope’s Kirk, &c.”

I shall only take notice of another Act of *Assembly*, which our Author very much misrepresents, *viz.* the *Directory* of Assembly 1649, which (*says he*, p. 133.) “ gives “ the decisive Vote in the Election of Pastors to the El- “ ders only.” And, p. 147. “ It robs the People of their “ Right to elect their Pastors so far, that they had not the “ Choice of any of the Persons to be upon the List for “ Ministers, in regard by that Act the Elders only had “ both the Nomination and Election.” Our Author adds, “ Tho’ the People had a Negative upon them, yet they “ might never have the Person they most inclined to have, “ if but four of seven Elders, &c. should be against the “ whole Parish.” Our Author cannot refuse that the People had a *Negative* over their Elders by the *Directory* 1649; and, if so, then it is plain that the People were so far from being robbed of their Right to chuse their own Ministers, that the Session could not impose a Minister upon them, if the Majority of the Congregation dissented; especially when it is considered, that according to the *Directory*, when the said Majority dissented, they were no more obliged to give their Reasons for their Dissent than the Session for their Election, as our Author pleads in his *Jus Populi*, p. 125, 126. And in the same Place, when speaking of the Affair of *Aberdeen* in the Year 1726, he reports, That, when such as opposed the Peoples being called as Consenters in the said Affair of *Aberdeen*, they said,

said, *They could see no Difference at all between calling them as decisive Voters, and making an exact Enquiry into their Sentiments as Consenters.* Our Author adds, "And indeed I own the Difference is but *small*, while as the Church of Scotland required their Consent to be enquired into, and People were not obliged to object against the Man's Life or Doctrine." Our Author, if he had pleased, might have said, 'Tis but a Strife about Words, to question whether the People should be called *decisive Voters*, or only *Consenters*, when the Presbytery must stop further Procedure, and when the Session must proceed to a new Election, if the Majority of the Congregation dissent, without being obliged to give any Reason for the same.

A considerable Divine, who is sometimes quoted by our Author *, affirms, "That the Right of Calling Ministers does not belong to the Church-representative, but originally and radically (*primario & radicaliter*) to the Society of the Faithful, or the collective Church, who, for Order's Sake, may transfer it upon the Church-representative; and yet in the mean Time do not altogether give up with their Right, but allow it to be exercised in their Name, and by their Authority, so that they may exercise it themselves, when they, to whom they have committed this Power, do basely abuse it *ad Mendacii propagationem*," i. e. by spreading a Lie, or by giving out that the Christian People are for a Man to be their Minister, when in the mean Time there is no Truth in it. And I find our Author, *Full Vindication*, p. 206. in his Dispute with his Adversary, who alledged that by the Assembly 1649 the Elders were considered as the Peoples Representatives; from this, I say, our Author justly concludes, That his Antagonist had yielded it unto him, "That the Assembly 1649 were of the Mind, that it is the Peoples Right originally to elect their own Pastors." Our Author adds, "If the Elders chuse for and in Name of the People, I think *no Man of common Understanding* can deny but it is the Peoples Right; and, if their Right, I see not but they must have a Right to exercise it, unless they have rendered themselves unworthy of it, or unfit for exercising thereof." From our Author's own Acknowledgment, as well as from the ample Negative that the Directory 1649 gives to the People over the Session, 'tis plain, that the said *Directory* is so far from denuding the People of their Right, that

* *Turret. de Necess. Secess.* p. 227.

it does acknowledge (as is well expressed by *Turretine*) that the Right of Election of Ministers is originally and radically in the whole Body of the Faithful; and, if so, then the Election which the *Directory* gives to the Session amounts to no more than a Nomination of one to be Minister of the Congregation. Therefore our Author misrepresents the *Directory*, when he affirms, that, according to it, the People might never have the Person they most inclined to have: For, from the *Negative*, which our Author in his *Full Vindication* proves to be given to the People over the Session, it rather follows, that the Elders or Session can never have the Man they most incline to have; yea, it follows, that they can never chuse any, with Hopes of having him settled to be their Minister, but the Man whom the Majority of the Congregation incline to have. And consequently, notwithstanding of the Noise our Author has made against the *Directory* 1649, as robbing in Part at least the People of their Right, I do not see that there is any Prejudice done to the Rights of the Christian People in calling their own Ministers thereby: And I doubt not to say, that if the *Directory* 1649 were revived, and the Method of settling Ministers therein prescribed were faithfully observed, we should have no Complaints thro' the Church of *Scotland* of the violent Settlement of Ministers. The Author of the *Essay* cannot alledge, that the Formality of making up a *Leit*, and of calling every one of the Congregation, Man by Man, is essential to the Calling of a Minister. According to the Custom of the primitive Church, the People signified their Choice by lifting up their Hands, as the original Word (*Acts* xiv. 23.) imports: And therefore I judge, that our Author gives a very good Answer unto an Objection that is frequently made against popular Elections, *viz.* the Confusion which must attend them, in his *Preface* to his *Jus Div.* p. 6. "I do not think the Votes of all, nor the Vote of
 " any at all, essential to the Calling of a Gospel-minister;
 " for if, at the Moderation, all agree upon a Person, I see
 " no Necessity for a Vote in the Affair: Or the Elder-
 " ship may be allowed to vote first; and, if all agree to
 " the Person voted for, I see no Need of calling more,
 " &c." He likewise justly observes, That it is the obtruding a Person upon a People, which only occasions Confusions at Moderations and Ordinations. I also join with him, when he says, That, if the People demand a Suffrage, it ought not to be refused; or, "If the People

“ differ as to the Person nominate, there is no coming to
 “ the certain Knowledge of their Inclinations, but by
 “ calling them Man by Man.” And I humbly judge, if
 the Directory 1649 is understood in its genuine Sense and
 Meaning, it grants all that our Author pleads for; and
 all this is likewise asserted upon the Matter by the Presby-
 tery in their *judicial Act and Testimony*, p. 100. tho’ our
 Author has several critical Questions upon their Assertion,
Essay p. 199. with which I shall not trouble the Reader,
 in regard I do not see any Difference betwixt him and them
 upon this Head.

Our Author frequently appeals unto a short Paper, cal-
 led, *Mr. Rutherford’s Dying Testimony*: He quotes it,
 p. 96. and gives us a long Citation from it; and concludes,
 that *Mr. Rutherford’s* Words show, “ That the Judica-
 “ tories of the Church were as guilty in the Period before
 “ 1650 in their Decisions, as any Thing that can be al-
 “ ledged against the Church of Scotland at this Day.” As
 for this Paper called *Mr. Rutherford’s Dying Testimony*,
 it was published in the Year 1713, and recommended to
 the World by an *anonymous* Author, whose Preface unto
 it contains a Variety of excellent Things; but since the said
 Testimony had not been heard of till the foresaid Year,
 and since it came abroad not subscribed by *Mr. Ruther-*
foord, nor attested by any Person who was acquainted with
Mr. Rutherford, or who was with him when on his Death-
 bed, this may give Ground to suspect if it is altogether
 genuine: But, upon Supposition that all that Testimony
 contains *Mr. Rutherford’s* own Words, the Words quoted
 by our Author cannot be applied to the Period before
 1650, but seem to be plainly intended of the Period after
 1650, when the Church was divided by the *publick Resolu-*
tions that were then taken; for, immediately after the above
 Words quoted by our Author, ’tis added, “ If the Word
 “ of Truth in the Old and New Testament be a sufficient
 “ Rule, holding forth what is a Christian Army, whether
 “ offensive or defensive; whether clean, or sinfully mixed;
 “ then must we leave the Question, betwixt our publick
 “ Brethren and us, to be determined by that Rule.” And
 I’m more confirmed that the Words in *Mr. Rutherford’s*
Testimony point at the Year 1650 and following Years,
 when I consider the ample *Testimony* he gives to the Pro-
 ceedings of the Year 1638 in his Letter to the Professors
 in Ireland, which I have noticed already; as also, the
 large Commendation that is given to the Work of Reformation,

mation, as it was carried on from 1638 to 1649, in the Testimony of the Ministers of *Perth* and *Fife*, which Mr. *Rutherford* likewise signs.

I have now done with examining our Author's invidious Reflections upon a famous reforming Period of this Church: I hope the Reader will see, that there is not the least Ground for the Charge that he lays against them of Tyranny in the Administration; and far less for his setting the Assembly 1733 and other Assemblies of this Period on a Level with them, as if they were as faithful in the Administration. I'm sorry that one of his Character and Profession has done so much towards weakning the Arguments that are taken for the Purity of our Reformation from that Period; and that he has never taken particular Notice of the several Proceedings of our Assemblies at that Time, for advancing the Kingdom of Christ, not only in this, but in all the three Nations, which the Ministers of *Perth* and *Fife* in their foresaid Testimony did bear particular Witness unto. And, notwithstanding of all that our Author has said, it will be found that there is just Ground for complaining, that the Judicatories of this Church did neither at the Resolution, nor since that Time, bear express Witness and Testimony unto the faithful Proceedings of the former Period, for carrying on a Work of Reformation. Our Author thinks fit with a Sneer to tell us, p. 133. "Of what Advantage could it be, to revive such Acts as that of the Assembly 1645, in which it is joined, *that these who are taught in Aristotle be found well instructed in his Text*? It is certainly the Duty of Assemblies to be careful about the Education of Youth, especially in the Colleges; We have had a Swatch of late from the Press, by a Student in *Glasgow*, of the moral *Philosophy* that is taught there: And I do not think it would be unworthy of the General Assembly 1639, to give such a Recommendation unto the Teacher anent *Aristotle*, as the Assembly 1645 did; or to recommend *Aristotle's* Ethicks unto him instead of his own Scheme, providing the Recommendation is given with some such Cautions as are mentioned in an Act of Assembly 1578 *. And it will be a further Evidence of the Degeneracy of this Church, if the Judicatories do not enquire into that Scheme of moral *Philosophy* that 'tis reported is taught there.

Tho' our Author speaks everywhere in a diminutive Manner of the Period, which he calls the *extolled Period*,

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yet

* *Cald. Hist.* p. 829.

yet I hope all the sincere Lovers of *Scotland's* covenanted Reformation desire to extol the Lord, who, with an outstretched Arm, gave a great and glorious Deliverance unto this Church in the Year 1638, and who did make his great Power to be known in maintaining, advancing and carrying on his own Work, until we did prove unstedfast and perfidious in his Covenant, particularly by taking the Adversaries of his Cause and Interest into our Bosom, as well as by other Steps of Backsliding from him; whereby he was provoked at last to deliver his Strength into Captivity, and his Glory into the Hands of his Enemies, and to throw his People in this Land into the hot Furnace of 28 Years Tribulation and Persecution. And we have just Ground to fear, that if the Lord shall enter into Judgment with us, on account of the Misimprovement of the Deliverance given us in the Year 1638, and for our manifold Defections and Backslidings from him since that Time, a Furnace seven Times hotter than the former may yet be set up in *Scotland*, Amos iv. 12.



C H A P. V.

Wherein some Exceptions laid by the Author of the Essay, against the Act and Testimony of the Associate Presbytery, are considered.

I Have had Occasion in the preceeding Chapters to consider several of the Exceptions that are laid by our Author against the *Act and Testimony* emitted by the *Associate Presbytery*: He endeavours through his whole *Essay* to misrepresent the said *Testimony*, sometimes by his *Criticisms* on the Words of the *Presbytery*, and sometimes he roundly charges them with reporting what is not Matter of Fact, and sometimes he condemns them as justifying what he reckons to be bad Acts. I have swelled this Book so much already, that I cannot at this Time go in to all our Author's particular Instances; I shall therefore only now touch at a few of them which I have not noticed already, and such as appear to me to be some of the most material Exceptions that are laid against the *Presbytery's Testimony*.

The *Associate Presbytery* in their *Act and Testimony*, p. 17. make mention of the Act of Parliament 1649 as a laudable Act; wherein it is statute and ordained, That the King, before he be admitted to the Exercise of the Royal Power, assure and declare, by his solemn Oath, his Allowance of the *National Covenant*, and the *Solemn League and Covenant*, &c. as it is narrated in the *Testimony*. This Act our Author reckons bad and unjustifiable, *Essay* p. 201. And this (*says he*) is evident, because, "1st, The Act declares 'tis necessary that King and People be of one perfect Religion." This our Author alledges to be contrary to our *Confession of Faith*, Chap. 23. Art. 4. I believe that our Author is the first that has discovered the Contrariety he mentions: It may be obvious to every Body, that the Necessity intended in the Preamble to the said Act is, that it is necessary for the good of the Subject, and for the Maintenance of their religious Liberties, that King and People be of one perfect Religion; yea, that it is necessary by vertue of the Command of God, that both King and Subjects be of one perfect or true Religion, in regard the Command of God binds all Ranks of Persons, the King as well as the Subject; therefore the Preamble contains a good Reason for the Act and Statute. Again, our Author reckons it hard that, by that Act, the King should not only swear for himself, but also for his *Successors*, when none could tell who they might be. But, is it not as hard for Parents to engage for their Children, when none of them can tell what they may be? Was ever this quarrelled by any Protestant Divine? Our Author may reckon *Moses's* Words to *Israel* as hard, *Deut. xxix. 14.* Neither with you only do I make this Covenant and this Oath; but with him that standeth with us here this Day before the Lord our God, and also with him that is not here with us this Day. But, as our Author is singular in many of his Reasonings, so likewise in this; for by the same Argument he overthrows the Obligation of all religious Oaths upon Posterity, which is contrary to the whole Scriptures. Another Reason to prove the above Act of Parliament bad is, That the King was bound to swear, "never to endeavour any Alteration of the Acts securing our Religion: For" (*says he*) some of these Acts stood very much in need of Alteration; as particularly the Act of Parliament 1592, which, tho' a good Act in the main, *says he*, yet had sundry Things in it very bad." What inconsistent Reasoning is here? Could the bad Things in any Act-se-

cure

cure our Religion? Therefore it is evident, that, when the King swore not to alter any Act *securing our Religion*, none of the bad Things in any Acts were sworn to be maintained; yea rather, by vertue of the Oath he was obliged to alter them. A *fourth* Reason our Author gives against the Act of Parliament is, That the King was obliged to take a *most illimited Oath*. But, how was it illimited? Our Author tells us, "That the King swore for himself and his *Successors* to agree to all Acts of Parliament injoining the Covenants, and fully establishing *Presbyterian Government*." He should have added, the *Directory for Worship, Confession of Faith and Catechisms*; for these are likewise mentioned in the Act: And I believe any Body but our Author will see that this is a very limited Oath. Our Author adds, "That, by the Oath administered to King Charles at *Scoon*, it seems it included Acts made or to be made: For, *says he*, the King was obliged to swear; *I, for myself and Successors, shall consent and agree to all Acts of Parliament injoining the National Covenant, and the Solemn League and Covenant;—and that I shall give my Royal Assent to all Acts and Ordinances of Parliament, past or to be past, injoining the same in my other Dominions.*" Our Author adds, "Here the King is sworn to what neither he nor the Imposers of that Oath could know what." But, in the mean Time, is it not expressly declared, that he should give his Royal Consent to *Acts injoining the Covenants*? And therefore both the King and the Parliament knew very well what the Oath obliged the King unto; but it seems a more than ordinary Antipathy at our Covenants has blinded his Eyes. I know not for what Reason our Author has again dropt our *Confession of Faith and Catechisms*; for these are also expressly mentioned in the King's Coronation-oath. But I shall not pursue his other two Reasons against the said Act of Parliament, in regard they have no more Strength in them than these I have mentioned.

Our Author, p. 102. tells his Reader, That the *seceding Brethren* in their *Act and Testimony*, p. 39. assert, That the Parliament immediately after the Revolution appointed the Oath of Allegiance to be sworn, *in place of any other Oaths imposed by Laws and Acts of preceeding Parliaments*. Our Author's first Observe is, That the *Brethren* never tell which of all the *nine Sessions* of King William's first Parliament it was. There are many such Omissions in our Author's *Essay*: We must sometimes search through a whole

whole Book for his Citations, as in the Citations he gives us from *Turretine*, *Essay* p. 27, 28. yea, through many Books, as in the Citation he gives us from *Durham*, p. 63. But our Author has fallen upon the Act of Parliament which he makes no Doubt we intend; and, according to him, it is the *second* Act of the *second* Session of King *William* and Queen *Mary's* *first* Parliament. Yet there is no such Clause as he himself quotes to be found in that Act; but the Reader may find it in *second* Act of the *first* Session of the said Parliament, where it is said, That "the Parliament do hereby retreat and rescind all preceeding Laws and Acts of Parliament, in so far as they impose any other Oaths of Allegiance, Supremacy, Declarations and Tests, excepting the Oath *de fidelis*." And this Act of Parliament bears an express Reference unto the *Claim of Right*, the last Article whereof declares, "That the Oath hereafter mentioned (*viz.* the Oath of Allegiance) be taken by all Protestants, of whom the Oath of Allegiance and any other Oaths and Declarations might be required by Law, instead of them; and that the said Oath of Allegiance, and other Oaths and Declarations, may be abrogated." Our Author thinks fit to exclaim against the Brethren, and alledges, That they take a Liberty of altering and changing the Words of Acts of Parliament, that they make them speak what they never intended; he likewise alledges, that nothing is meant by the Oaths mentioned in the Act of Parliament and Claim of Right, but the sinful Oaths in the former Period, which were still in Force by Law, &c. But the Brethren in their *Testimony* did foresee the above Objection, and therefore they explain themselves in the following Manner; "Yet, *say they*, the Terms in which the Act of Parliament is conceived appear plainly to exclude the Oath of the Covenant, which contained a very solemn Test of Allegiance to the Sovereign; especially when it is considered, that the above-mentioned *Act rescissory* was not repealed." By the *Act rescissory* they mean, the Act past in the first Session of King *Charles II's* Parliament, *Anno* 1661, whereby all the Parliaments of our reforming Period, as also all their Acts and Deeds, were declared null and void. Hence it is obvious, that the Strength of the Brethrens Reasonings upon this Head does not lean to the Words of the Act of Parliament *rescinding* all preceeding Laws,—in so far as they impose any other Oaths of *Allegiance*, &c. but they assert what is plain Matter of Fact,

Fact, viz. That our *Covenant-allegiance* was left buried by the Parliament 1690; and that, instead of reviving our *Covenant-allegiance*, the Oath of *Allegiance* contained in their Act is imposed; and therefore they justly argue, that the above Act of Parliament is conceived in such Terms, as appear plainly to exclude the Oath of the Covenant: And for this same Reason they affirm, p. 46. " That the Oath of *Abjuration*, together with the *Allegiance*, is substitute in the Room of our *Solemn National Covenants*, which contain the strictest Engagements of Duty to the *Sovereign*, a most solemn Renunciation of Popery, and consequently of all Popish Pretenders whatsoever."

As for what our Author alledges, p. 107. " To me, says he, it is unfair in the Brethren, and these who now exclaim against the *Abjuration*, that they never mention the different *Forms* or *Draughts* thereof, as if there had not been the least Appearance of Difference between them, &c." I answer, They did not think it needful to mention these different *Forms* or *Draughts*, in regard they judged that, in all its several *Forms* and *Draughts*, the united Constitution was homologate.

The Author of the *Essay* charges the Brethren with asserting in their *Testimony* several Things which are not Matter of Fact; as *Essay*, p. 91. he says, They assert, all the Prelates were *deposed from the Ministry* (viz. by the Assembly 1638) *Act and Testimony*, p. 14 and 40. This, says our Author, is not Matter of Fact. But the Brethren say no such Thing as our Author alledges: For, in both Places quoted by him, they say only that all the Bishops were deposed; these Words, *from the Ministry*, are an Addition of his own, that he may the more easily fix a Falseness upon the Testimony. But 'tis plain, that all the Prelates were deposed by the Assembly 1638 from their pretended Episcopal Function; Two of them were suspended only from the Ministry for the Reasons I have already given: And, when the Brethren say they were *All* deposed, they speak according to the Title of the several Acts relative unto them; they speak likewise in the Stile of all the Writers at that Time, and in the express Words of the Ministers of *Perth* and *Fife* in their Testimony.

The Author of the *Essay*, p. 97. takes Notice of the following Assertion in the *Act and Testimony*, p. 43. where, speaking of the Declarations of the Commission of the General Assembly in their Petitions against the *Union*, they

say,

say, " But, as the ensuing General Assembly only approved
 " of the Proceedings of this Commission in *common Form*,
 " without an express Approbation of their Conduct in this
 " Particular, tho' Matters of less Moment have sometimes
 " been particularly noticed, &c." Our Author affirms,
 That in this Two or Three Things are asserted by the
 Presbytery which are not Matter of Fact. The *first* In-
 stance that he gives is, That the Assembly, in ratifying the
 Proceedings of that Commission, commended and thanked
 them for their great Zeal, Faithfulness and Diligence.
 " Now, *says he*, in giving their Zeal and Faithfulness the
 " Epithet of GREAT, this was out of the common
 " Form, and more than any of our Assemblies use to do
 " in approving their Commissions." But our Author is
 very much mistaken: For the Epithet of *Great* is some-
 times given to the Zeal, Faithfulness and Diligence of the
 Commission, and sometimes the Epithet *Much*, and this will
 be found to be frequent and *common Form* for a considerable
 Time after the Revolution; and the Difference between
great Zeal and *much Zeal* is not very material. The As-
 sembly 1703 approve of their Commission for their *great*
 Pains and Diligence in the Affairs referred to them; the
 Assembly 1700 approve of their Commission for *much* Di-
 ligence and Faithfulness; so the Assembly 1697 use the
 Term *Much*; and the Assembly 1695 commend two former
 Commissions, as evidencing in their Proceedings *much*
 Wisdom—and commendable Zeal: Likewise the As-
 sembly 1701 approve of the Proceedings of a Commission
 of the former Assembly, as evidencing *much* Wisdom,—
 Zeal and Faithfulness. Another Mistake that he charges
 the Presbytery with is, That *they say*, " Sometimes Mat-
 " ters of less Moment have been particularly noticed." Upon
 this he observes, That, in " approving the Com-
 " mission in all our Acts since the Revolution, the Assem-
 " bly have never noticed any Affairs in particular." It
 had been more for our Author's Honour, if he had con-
 sulted the Registers more exactly, before he had charged
 the *Judicial Act and Testimony* in such broad Terms, as
 asserting Things that are not Matter of Fact: For the
 Assembly 1714, in their Approbation of the Proceedings
 of the Commission of the former General Assembly, do
 deservedly take particular Notice of the Zeal of that Com-
 mission against *Popery* and a *Popish Pretender*, expressed in
 that excellent Paper, their *Seasonable Warning*; which

Approbation is recorded among the printed Acts of that Year. Also, the General Assembly 1735 approve of the preceeding Commission;” and, in particular, they got the “ Assembly’s Thanks for their Care, in causing Application to be made to the King and Parliament for the Repeal of the Patronage-act;” as is to be seen in the *Index* of the unprinted Acts that Year. Whether these Things are of less Moment than the *Union*, is not the present Question; but it may be safely said, That the Addresses of the Commission relative to the *Union* deserved at least an equal Regard.

Our Author, p. 98. after his usual Manner, makes a Retreat to our reforming Period, and tells us, “ For as momentuous an Affair the *solemn Acknowledgment of publick Sins, and Engagement to Duties*, drawn up by the Commission of the Assembly 1648, was; yet the Assembly 1649 never took the least Notice of it.” But our Author might have known, that the Covenant was sworn with the above Acknowledgment of Sins and Engagement to Duties according to an Act of the Commission, and with Concurrence of the Estates of Parliament, by all Ranks of Persons in *Scotland* before the Meeting of the Assembly 1649; and consequently, the Commission’s Act had the particular and express Approbation of all the Synods and Presbyteries, yea, and of all the Ministers and Members of the Church of *Scotland* before the said Meeting of Assembly: Therefore there was not the least Occasion for the Assembly 1649 to make particular Mention of it in their Act approving the Proceedings of the said Commission. But we find that they make a Reference unto it once and again, as a Deed approven and justified by the whole Church of *Scotland*: As for Instance, in their *seasonable and necessary Warning*, July 27th, Sess. 27. they have these Words; “ It is Matter of exceeding great Sorrow, to think upon the Ignorance and Profanity, the Impenitence and Security that still abounds in the Land, notwithstanding — of our late *solemn Confession of Sins, and Engagement unto Duties*, sealed with the Renewing of the Covenant and Oath of God.” And in their Act anent Catechising, July 30th, “ The General Assembly taking into their serious Consideration on the great Darkness and Ignorance wherein a great Part of this Kingdom lieth, together with the late *solemn Engagement* to use all Means for Remedy thereof; “ do

“ do ordain, &c.” Our Author then writes at Random, as I have observed he frequently does, when he tells us, that the Assembly 1649 never took the *least Notice* of the solemn Acknowledgment of Sins and Engagement to to Duties. Whether he has read the Acts of Assembly or not, I shall not determine; but, if he has read them, he seems to me to have designed to palm it upon the World, that the Assembly 1649 had as little Regard to the Renewing of the Covenant as the present Judicatories seem to have. I might likewise here observe, that the Author of the *Essay* is also mistaken, when he affirms, That, in all our old Acts from 1638 to 1650, there is but one Instance of any particular Deed of the Commissions of the several Assemblies noticed, *viz.* that which he mentions in the Year 1648. I shall not give the Reader the Trouble of transcribing, but refer him or our Author to Assembly 1645, *Sess.* 18. and Assembly 1649, *Sess.* 19. where he may see, that the Deeds of several Commissions have been particularly noticed by several Assemblies; and other Instances might be given, if it were needful.

The seceding Brethren in their *Act and Testimony*, p. 41. observe from the *Index* of the unprinted Acts 1690, a Declaration made by the Moderator, “ That the Assembly would depose no Incumbents simply for their Judgment anent the Government of the Church.” The Presbytery add, “ That is, they (*viz.* the Assembly by their Moderator) declare, that the perfidious Prelates and their Underlings were not to be deposed for their treacherous Defection from the covenanted Principles of this Church.” Upon which our Author, *Essay* p. 90. explains the above Assertion of the Presbytery in the following Manner; “ As if that one Principle simply, of a Man’s being for Prelacy, was enough to depose him from the Ministry, tho’ as holy as *Cranmer*, *Ridley*, &c.” But these, of whom the Moderator of the fore-said Assembly speaks from the Chair, were, as the Presbytery observe, perfidious Prelates, and guilty of a treacherous Defection; but such were not *Cranmer* and *Ridley*. If I should transcribe the Apology that our Author makes for that Assembly, I believe any Reader of ordinary Capacity might think I impose upon his Understanding: As for Instance, When our Author tells us, “ That the Moderator might declare as above, while perhaps the major Part was against it, tho’ they might see meet to let

“ it pass at that Time ; or it might be the Moderator’s
 “ Mind this was Fact, and yet he laboured under a
 “ Mistake.” But ’tis obvious even to the weakest Capacity, that as the Moderator’s Declaration stands recorded in the Assembly’s Books, and pointed out by the unprinted Acts ; so the above Declaration behoved to be the Mind of at least the major Part of that Assembly, and stands upon Record as a Deed of the same.

The Author of the *Essay*, p. 151. charges the *Judicial Act and Testimony* with five or six Things that are not Matter of Fact, when it declares, p. 40. “ That it was the laudable Practice in reforming Times to condemn all Steps of Defection, and duly to censure such as were guilty of Backsliding, &c.” I shall not weary the Reader with transcribing ; if he pleases, he may compare what our Author calls Mistakes, with what I have observed already in the former Chapter, concerning the Difference betwixt the Proceedings of the Assembly 1638, and these of the Assembly 1690, and he will readily see the Unjustice of our Author’s Charge against the Presbytery’s *Act and Testimony*. Neither shall I insist at this Time on any other of our Author’s particular Exceptions against the said judicial *Act and Testimony* ; I doubt not but every unbiaſſed and unprejudiced Reader may see, that they are of the same Kind with these that I have noticed, viz. such gross Misrepresentations, that savour much of a Spirit disoblighd or irritate against the seceding Brethren, upon some one Occasion or another.

I cannot omit to take Notice of one other particular Instance, and that is, the Treatment he gives to my *Reverend Brother Mr. Mair*, *Essay* p. 117. “ To affirm, says he, the Judicatories of this Church have done what in them lay to pull the Crown off Christ’s Head, refusing to give him the Glory of his Supreme Deity, is an unaccountable and groundless Charge, unworthy of the weakest.” And upon his Margin he mentions Mr. *Mair*, *Second Test.* p. 113. When our Author gives a *Reverend Brother*, who is very well known in his Neighbourhood, such a diminutive Character, it argues such a Bitterness of Spirit, blended with such a Quantity of Pride and Self-estimation, as, I shall not say, is unworthy of the weakest, but I may say, ’tis not like common Prudence, or ordinary Civility and Discretion ; especially when it may be found, that the Charge, as it is laid by the *Reverend*

send Mr. Mair, is not so unaccountable and groundless as our Author alledges. To support the above Charge, our Author puts the following Questions; " Did it not ly in
 " their Power to declare the Positions charged against Pro-
 " fessor *Simson* are Truths, and not Errors? Did it not
 " ly in their Power to censure any that would call them
 " Errors? — Was it not in their Power to commend
 " him as teaching sound Doctrine? &c." The plain Im-
 port and Meaning of the above Queries is, Was it not in
 the Power of the Judicatories to declare, that the great
 God our Saviour is not the Independent God, is not Neces-
 sarily-existent, is not Self-existent, and that the Three Per-
 sons of the adorable Trinity are not One Substance in Num-
 ber? *Horresco referens*; it may make one tremble to think
 what Liberty this Author takes unto himself, in the above,
 which he no doubt reckons to be pungent Queries. I wish
 he had writ with more Sobriety upon such a grave and
 weighty Subject. But, in Answer to his above Queries,
 If the Judicatories had declared in the above Manner ex-
 pressed by our Author, their Declaration would have been
 a barefaced and expresse Voting of our Confession of Faith
 to the Door; and I doubt if it is in their Power to do so,
 while the Act of Parliament 1690 ratifying our Confessi-
 on of Faith stands: But yet in the mean Time, if their
 Conduct and Behaviour towards Mr. *Simson*, and if their
 Management of that Process is considered, they have, as I
 already observed, stript our Confession of Faith of one of
 the principal Ends and Designs of Confessions of this Na-
 ture; tho' in the mean Time it must be held some way
 or other, since it is ratified by the Laws of the Land. I
 must further observe, that our Author cites our Brother
 Mr. *Mair's* Words after his ordinary partial Manner:
 When the Reverend Mr. *Mair* asserts, that the Judica-
 tories had been doing what in them lay to pull the Crown
 off Christ's Head, he adds, " Refusing to give him the Glory
 " due to his Name, to give him the Glory of his Supreme
 " Deity, by resenting suitably the blasphemous Denial of the
 " same; and, instead thereof, have even kept the Blas-
 " phemer in full Communion with the Church, and re-
 " fuse all Calls to lay to Heart or acknowledge their Sin
 " in this." These are the Reverend Mr. *Mair's* own
 Words, and ought to have been quoted by our Author,
 if he had designed to treat him with Candor; but it is
 upon such partial Quotations that our Author builds

his

his leading Arguments from Authority. But, for further clearing of Mr. *Mair's* Expressions, let me suppose that I should say, that the Reverend Mr. *Currie*, Author of the *Essay*, has done what lay in his Power to weaken the Authority and Reputation of the Assembly 1638, as well as the Authority of the other Assemblies of that Period; our Author according to his above Way of Reasoning might reply, Did it not ly in my Power to defend the Cause of the Prelates? Did it not ly in my Power to approve of their *Declinature* of the Assembly 1638? Did it not ly in my Power to declare them a treasonable and seditious Meeting, as King *Charles I.* by his Proclamation did? But if our Author, or if any who has writ against the Assembly 1638 as he has done, should speak after this Manner; it might be safely told them, that they had now taken off the Mask, and that they had now declared themselves openly to be, what really they were, even Enemies to the Work and Interest of Christ in *Scotland*; and it might be likewise told them, that they spoke in an arrogant Manner, as if they were independent on God, or without the Restraints of his adorable Providence: And this I take to be imported in the above Queries proposed by our Author. And as for the Reverend Mr. *Mair's* Expressions, they only import, that when the Judicatories did not particularly and expressly condemn the several erroneous Propositions vented by Mr. *Simson*, and when they did not suitably resent the blasphemous Denial of the true Deity of the Son of God, but screened and protected Mr. *Simson* from the Censure he deserved, and, instead thereof, kept him in full Communion with the Church; they could not have done a greater Injury to the Deity of his Person, in a Consistency with that Profession which they continued to make. As for what our Author subjoins, That the Assembly, in their Act suspending Mr. *Simson*, have plainly asserted the proper Supreme Deity of our Lord Jesus. I have already observed in the *Postscript* to the printed Letter, p. 37. That our modern *Arians* will acknowledge a proper Supreme Deity in the Person of the Son, in a Consistency with their own Scheme; as also, that Mr. *Simson* will subscribe to the Words of the above Act of Assembly according to his own Sense and Meaning of them, without disclaiming his darling Proposition, that the Terms, *Necessary Existence, Supreme Deity, and Title* of

of The only true God, may be taken, and are by some Authors taken, in a Sense that includes the personal Property of the Father, and so not belonging to the Son ; and therefore I shall not further insist upon it in this Place.

Our Author lays some general Exceptions against the *judicial Act and Testimony*; as for Instance, he alledges, That Separatists may complain that it is very defective and unfaithful, p. 149. I answer, The *seceding Brethren* did never pretend to emit a perfect Testimony, and I doubt not but they will readily acknowledge that their Testimony may have many Defects: And if any, whether they are Separatists or not, shall discover unto them any publick Steps of Defection which ought to be testified against, and which they have omitted, I know nothing to hinder them from enlarging their Testimony upon a proper Occasion. As for the Defects that are alledged by our Author, I have already taken notice of some of them; and, as for others of them, it does not appear to me that they deserve any Regard. Our Author also alledges, That the *judicial Act and Testimony* is not plain, p. 150. But I still judged, that it was more plain than pleasant to many. As for the Instances that our Author gives, I shall leave it to the Reader to judge whether they amount to a Proof, that the Testimony of the *seceding Brethren* wants any Thing of that Plainness that is necessary for a Testimony of this Kind. Our Author further alledges, p. 151. " Things disputed
" among the truly godly, learned and tender, have not
" been thought so proper Matter for a publick Testimony." But I must ask our Author, Has not our Presbyterian Church-government and Discipline been disputed even by some who were learned and godly? Must we therefore give up with our Government as improper Matter for a publick Testimony? Yea, I could give Instances unto him in several Articles of our Confession of Faith, that have been disputed by some who have been reckoned godly and learned: Shall we therefore, upon the Account of the Errors and Corruptions of godly and learned Men, give up with our Confession of Faith? Our Author's Reasonings, as I have frequently observed, are laid against all Confessions of Faith, as a Bond of Ecclesiastical Union and Communion.

The *Essay* on Separation is filled with Invectives against the *seceding Brethren*, and against such as declare their
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Adherence to their *Act and Testimony*: But whoever they are, that have declared their Adherence unto the *Associate Presbytery* and their *Act and Testimony*, they have neither been forced nor compelled to this, they are all Volunteers in the Cause. And I have good Ground to believe, that a considerable Number in *Scotland* are moved from a Principle of Conscience in their declared Adherence to the *Act and Testimony*; and that they are not led by an implicate Faith, but by Knowledge and Judgment in this Matter. When our Author alledges, That there are many Things in the Testimony above the Capacity of not a few serious Souls, p. 167. This is the very same Thing that is alledged against all *Creeds* and *Confessions* of Faith: Yet, if any come in to the Associate Presbytery, and declare their Adherence to their Testimony, who have neither read nor considered it, I shall condemn them as acting without Knowledge and Judgment; but I cannot condemn any of the Adherers to the judicial *Act and Testimony*, as if they were led by implicate Faith, from such Reasons as our Author gives: As for Instance, when he tells us, p. 151. That the seceding Ministers “have not
 “told what are the many valuable Pieces of Reformation
 “this Church and Land had once attained, which they
 “affirm, *Act and Testimony* p. 47. were upon the Matter
 “given up at the Revolution.” But here there is no Ground for the Charge of implicate Faith; for the Presbytery, p. 38, 39, 40, 41, 42. do plainly declare what these valuable Pieces of Reformation were, which, they say, were not only neglected, but also materially given up at the Revolution. Another Instance that he gives of adhering to the Testimony by implicate Faith, is a *Latin* Sentence insert in the Testimony, p. 57. But, when the Reader looks into the preceeding Page, he sees that *Latin* Proposition Word for Word in *English*. However, it is not strange to see honest People run down as acting by implicate Faith, and dealing in Matters above their Capacity; for 'tis long since it was said, *John* vii. 48, 49. *Have any of the Rulers, or of the Pharisees believed on him? but this People, who know not the Law, are cursed.*

The CONCLUSION.

I Have now considered what I judged most material in the *Essay* against the Conduct of the *Associate Presbytery*, their *Judicial Act and Testimony*, and the *Proceedings of our reforming Period*. If I had noticed every Thing that deserved Animadversion, I had found enough in every Page of our Author's Performance to have swelled this Book to a much greater Bulk. I have Ground to make an Apology for writing so much upon the Subject, and yet I could not do less in order to vindicate the Conduct of the *Associate Presbytery*, and for clearing the Proceedings of our reforming Period, as also for discovering our Author's gross Misrepresentations of both. Tho' I have frequently read over the *Essay* on Separation; yet, 'tis like, some Things may have escaped my Notice, which others may reckon material: And therefore, if there is need for it, I may afterwards publish an Appendix to this Book. I have not judged it worth while to enquire into his *Hearsays* or *private Stories*, as I observed in my *Postscript*; however frequent these are with the Author of the *Essay*, yet it is neither a manly nor decent Way of managing a Cause. And besides, if I had dipt into them, it must have issued in flat Contradictions unto the most if not all of them; and, after all, the Cause in Question would have got no Advantage on either Side.

But, in regard the Author of the *Essay*, p. 104. with Design (as appears) to throw a Reflection upon my *Reverend Brother Mr. Ebenezer Erskine*; when speaking of the last Form of the Oath of *Abjuration*, he says, "Of the Lawfulness
" of which last Form, the Reverend Mr. Ebenezer Erskine
" was so much convinced, that he gave it under his Hand
" to the Laird of Naughtoun, Sheriff-depute of Fife, that
" he had Clearness to take it, and should take it when re-
" quired, tho' there was something peculiar in his Cir-
" cumstances, so as he would not take it that Day on
" which it was taken by other Ministers of his Presbytery.
" This is no Secret; for his Obligation to take it was read
" openly in the Synod of Fife." Upon the above Story, reported by the Author of the *Essay*, I wrote the *Reverend Mr. Erskine*; and he gave me a Return, wherein he

expresses himself with his ordinary Candor and Ingenuity, and I think it not improper to insert it here: It is as follows.

R. & D. B.

“ IN Answer to yours, relating to that Paragraph in Mr.
 “ *Currie’s Essay* which concerns me in particular, I have
 “ nothing to say, but only, without Irritation of Mind,
 “ to acknowledge, that I was so far overcome with the
 “ subtle Arguings of Brethren, who were clear about
 “ the Oath in its second Edition, as to declare that I had
 “ Freedom also: But as I did not take it at that Time,
 “ so, upon after Thought and Consideration, I saw just
 “ Cause to alter my Judgment, and declared so much in
 “ a Letter to the Laird of *Naughtoun*, which was read,
 “ as I heard, before the Synod of *Fife*. I shall only add,
 “ That I bless the Lord, that, when my Foot had well
 “ nigh slipt, his Mercy held me up, and I hope shall help
 “ and uphold me to the End. *I am*

Yours, &c.

EBENEZER ERSKINE.

From the above Letter the Reader may see, that Mr. *Erskine* ingenuously acknowledges what the Author of the *Essay* alledges, that he had once Clearness to take the Oath, but notwithstanding of this he saw just Cause afterwards to alter his Judgment; and I think this is no Disparagement to the Reverend Mr. *Erskine’s* Character. And the Author of the *Essay* could not but know that he had writ as above to the Laird of *Naughtoun*, especially if the Letter was read before the Synod; therefore it is not very fair in our Author to conceal that Part of the Story, and it also argues an Intention and Design of defaming his Brother.

I shall part at the Time with the Reverend Mr. *Currie*, when I have observed, That he fronts his *short Vindication* with a Sentence from *Augustine*, pointing at the great Regard he has for his own Character and Reputation: But, as that great Light of the primitive Church was in his
 young-

younger Years dipt in very gross Errors, so he was not ashamed to write a particular and honest Retraction of them. And as our *Reverend* Author observes, *Essay*, p. 216. "*Augustine* was not more famous for any Thing, than " for his Ingenuity in writing a Book of Retractions, " in which he frankly acknowledged his former Mistakes " and Errors;" I wish the *Reverend* Mr. Currie would follow the Pattern and Example cast before him by this great Man, and that he would reflect, with serious Sobriety and Calmness, upon the lax Principles that he has vented concerning Church-communion, as also upon the Injuries he has done to a reforming Period of this Church, whereby the Mouths of many of our Enemies are opened, and the present Generation are hardened in their Backsliding from the Lord. I conclude with the Advice which he reports *Ferome* gave to *Ruffinus*, " Never blush to change " thy Opinion; for neither you nor I, nor any Person " alive, are of so great Authority, as to be ashamed to " confess we have erred."

F I N I S.





The CONTENTS.

Page

INTRODUCTION.

Containing a short Narrative of some Contendings in a Way of Church-communion, for some Years immediately before the Secession from the present Judicatories was stated.

19

CHAP. I.

*Wherein the true State of the Question concerning Se-
cession from the present Judicatories is enquired into.*

33

SECT. I.

*Some Observes concerning the Church, and Church-
communion.*

34

SECT. II.

*The Question mis-stated, and several lax Principles
anent Church-communion maintained, in the Essay.*

39

SECT. III.

*Wherein the State of the Question concerning Secession
from the present Judicatories is declared.*

63

CHAP. II.

*Wherein the Argument for Secession from the present Ju-
dicatories is stated, and also vindicated from the Ex-
ceptions laid against the same by the Author of the
Essay.*

75

SECT. I.

*Wherein it is proven, that this National Church, as
she is represented in her present Judicatories, has not
the Scripture-character of the Church of the living God,
1 Tim. iii. 15.*

76

SECT. II.

*Wherein it is proven, that the present Judicatories of this
National Church are tyrannical in the Administration
of Government and Discipline.*

100

SECT. III.

*Concerning the Administration of Gospel-ordinances by
such as are imposed upon dissenting and reclaiming
Congregations.*

118

SECT.

The CONTENTS.

Page

SECT. IV.

Wherein it is shown, that, by some Acts and Deeds of the present Judicatories, sinful and unwarrantable Terms of Communion are imposed upon the Members of this Church.

127

SECT. V.

Wherein it is proven, that when the Majority of the Office-bearers of a Church do obstinately carry on a Course of Defection from Reformation-principles once attained unto, that the Minority in this Case, tho' very few in Number, have Divine Right and Warrant to exercise the Keys of Government and Discipline in a distinct Capacity from them.

133

SECT. VI.

Wherein the Conduct of the Judicatories is considered, since the Time that the Secession from them was first stated and declared; and particularly the Conduct of Ministers and Judicatories with respect unto the late Act of Parliament anent Captain John Porteous, as also the Act of Assembly 1738 against the seceding Ministers, are enquired into.

155

CHAP. III.

Wherein the Arguments advanced by the Author of the Essay, against Secession from the present Judicatories, are examined.

177

SECT. I.

Wherein the Scripture-arguments, against Secession from the present Judicatories, are considered.

179

SECT. II.

Wherein the human Authorities advanced by the Author of the Essay, against Secession from the present Judicatories, are examined.

188

SECT. III.

Wherein the Argument against Secession from the present Judicatories, from the Conduct of the faithful Ministers betwixt 1596 and 1638, is examined.

203

CHAP. IV.

Wherein the injurious Reflections cast upon the reforming Period of this Church, betwixt 1638 and 1650, by the Author of the Essay, are considered.

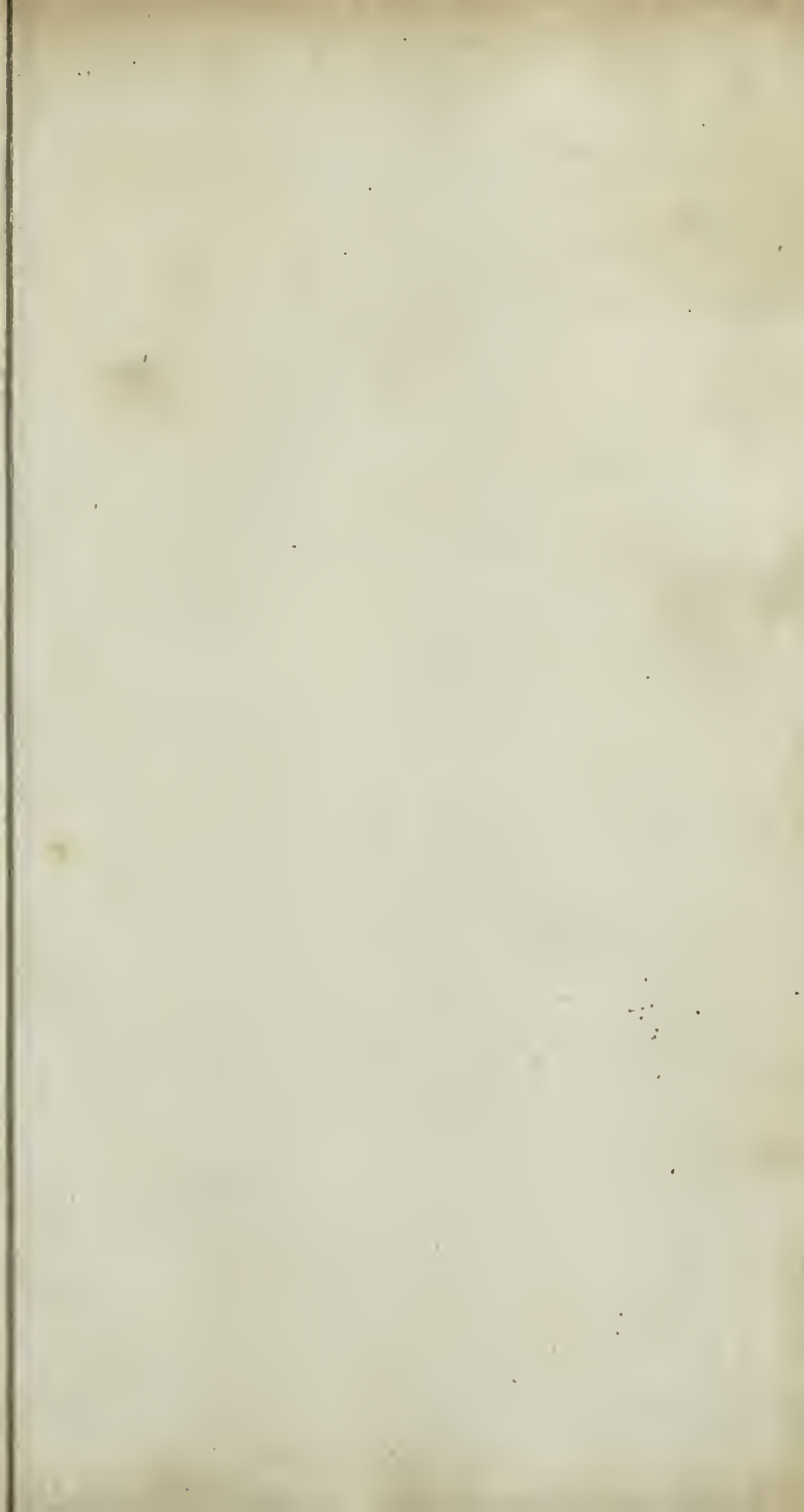
225

SECT.

The CONTENTS.

	Page
SECT. I.	
<i>A short historical Account of that glorious Appearance of God for the Church of Scotland in the Year 1638.</i>	228
SECT. II.	
<i>Wherein the injurious Reflections that are cast by the Author of the Essay upon the Assembly 1638, are considered.</i>	273
SECT. III.	
<i>Wherein the Exceptions that are laid by the Author of the Essay, against the Acts and Proceedings of several Assemblies of our reforming Period after the Year 1638, are considered.</i>	292
CHAP. V.	
<i>Wherein some Exceptions laid by the Author of the Essay, against the Act and Testimony of the Associate Presbytery, are considered.</i>	316
Conclusion,	329





$$\begin{array}{r}
 3 - \\
 - 27 \\
 27 \\
 27 \\
 27 \\
 27 \\
 27 \\
 27 \\
 27 \\
 27 \\
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 \end{array}$$

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